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THE
ASIATIC SOCIETY OF BOMBAY
TOWN HALL, BOMBAY-1.

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WERNER.

WERNER,

A TRAGEDY.

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BY LORD BYRON.

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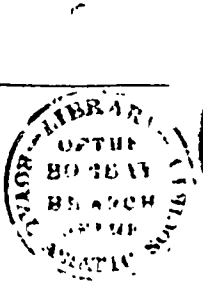

LONDON:
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE-STREET.
1823.

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TO

THE ILLUSTRIOUS GOËTHE,

BY ONE OF HIS HUMBLEST ADMIRERS,

THIS TRAGEDY

IS DEDICATED.

PREFACE.

THE following drama is taken entirely from the "*German's Tale, Kruitzner,*" published many years ago in "*Lee's Canterbury Tales;*" written (I believe) by two sisters, of whom one furnished only this story and another, both of which are considered superior to the remainder of the collection. I have adopted the characters, plan, and even the language, of many parts of this story. Some of the characters are modified or altered, a few of the names changed, and one character (Ida of Stralenheim) added by myself: but in the rest the original is chiefly followed. When I was young (about fourteen, I think) I first read this tale, which made a deep impression upon me; and may, indeed, be said to contain the germ of much that I have since written. I am not sure that it ever was very popular; or, at any rate, its popularity has since been eclipsed by that of other great writers in the same department. But I have generally found that those who *had* read it, agreed with me in their estimate of the singular power of

mind and conception which it developes. I should also add *conception*, rather than execution; for the story might, perhaps, have been more developed with greater advantage. Amongst those whose opinions agreed with mine upon this story, I could mention some very high names; but it is not necessary, nor indeed of any use; for every one must judge according to their own feelings. I merely refer the reader to the original story, that he may see to what extent I have borrowed from it; and am not unwilling that he should find much greater pleasure in perusing it than the drama which is founded upon its contents.

I had begun a drama upon this tale so far back as 1815 (the first I ever attempted, except one at thirteen years old, called "*Ulric and Ilvina*," which I had sense enough to burn), and had nearly completed an act, when I was interrupted by circumstances. This is somewhere amongst my papers in England; but as it has not been found, I have re-written the first, and added the subsequent acts.

The whole is neither intended, nor in any shape adapted, for the stage.

Feb. 1822.

WERNER.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

Werner.
Ulric.
Stralenheim.
Idenstein.
Gabor.
Fritz.
Henrick.
Eric.
Arnheim.
Meister.
Rodolph.
Ludwig.

WOMEN.

Josephine.
Ida Stralenheim.

Scene—partly on the frontier of Silesia, and partly in Siegendorf Castle, near Prague.

Time—the close of the thirty years' war.

WERNER;

OR,

THE INHERITANCE.

BOMBAY BRANCH OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY

ACT I. SCENE I.

The Hall of a decayed Palace near a small Town on the northern Frontier of Silesia—the Night tempestuous.

WERNER *and* JOSEPHINE *his wife.*

JOSEPHINE.

My love, be calmer!

WERNER.

I am calm.

JOSEPHINE.

To me—
Yes, but not to thyself: thy pace is hurried,
And no one walks a chamber like to ours
With steps like thine when his heart is at rest.
Were it a garden, I should deem thee happy,
And stepping with the bee from flower to flower;
But *here!*

WERNER.

'Tis chill; the tapestry lets through
The wind to which it waves: my blood is frozen.

JOSEPHINE.

Ah, no!

WERNER (*smiling*).

Why! wouldst thou have it so?

JOSEPHINE.

I would
Have it a healthful current.

WERNER.

Let it flow
Until 'tis spilt or check'd—how soon, I care not.

JOSEPHINE.

And am I nothing in thy heart?

WERNER.

All—all.

JOSEPHINE.

Then canst thou wish for that which must break mine?

WERNER (*approaching her slowly*).

But for *thee* I had been—no matter what,
But much of good and evil; what I am,
Thou knowest; what I might or should have been,
Thou knowest not: but still I love thee, nor
Shall aught divide us.

[WERNER *walks on abruptly, and then approaches*

JOSEPHINE.

The storm of the night,
Perhaps, affects me; I'm a thing of feelings,
And have of late been sickly, as, alas!

Thou know'st by sufferings more than mine, my love!
In watching me.

JOSEPHINE.

To see thee well is much—
To see thee happy——

WERNER.

Where hast thou seen such?
Let me be wretched with the rest!

JOSEPHINE.

But think
How many in this hour of tempest shiver
Beneath the biting wind and heavy rain,
Whose every drop bows them down nearer earth,
Which hath no chamber for them save beneath
Her surface.

WERNER.

And that's not the worst: who cares
For chambers? rest is all. The wretches whom
Thou namest—ay, the wind howls round them, and
The dull and dropping rain saps in their bones
The creeping marrow. I have been a soldier,
A hunter, and a traveller, and am
A beggar, and should know the thing thou talk'st of.

JOSEPHINE.

And art thou not now shelter'd from them all?

WERNER.

Yes. And from these alone.

JOSEPHINE.

And that is something.

WERNER.

True—to a peasant.

JOSEPHINE.

Should the nobly born
Be thankless for that refuge which their habits
Of early delicacy render more
Needful than to the peasant, when the ebb
Of fortune leaves them on the shoals of life?

WERNER.

It is not that, thou know'st it is not; we
Have borne all this, I'll not say patiently,
Except in thee—but we have borne it.

JOSEPHINE.

Well?

WERNER.

Something beyond our outward sufferings (though
These were enough to gnaw into our souls)
Hath stung me oft, and, more than ever, *now*.
When, but for this untoward sickness, which
Seized me upon this desolate frontier, and
Hath wasted, not alone my strength, but means,
And leaves us—no! this is beyond me!—but
For this I had been happy—*thou* been happy—
The splendour of my rank sustain'd—my name—
My father's name—been still upheld; and, more
Than those——

JOSEPHINE (*abruptly*).

My son—our son—our Ulric,
Been clasp'd again in these long empty arms,
And all a mother's hunger satisfied.
Twelve years! he was but eight then:—beautiful
He was, and beautiful he must be now.
My Ulric! my adored!

WERNER.

I have been full oft
The chase of fortune; now she hath o'ertaken
My spirit where it cannot turn at bay,—
Sick, poor, and lonely.

JOSEPHINE.

Lonely! my dear husband?

WERNER.

Or worse—involving all I love, in this
Far worse than solitude. *Alone*, I had died,
And all been over in a nameless grave.

JOSEPHINE.

And I had not outlived thee; but pray take
Comfort! We have struggled long; and they who strive
With fortune win or weary her at last,
So that they find the goal, or cease to feel
Further. Take comfort,—we shall find our boy.

WERNER.

We were in sight of him, of every thing
Which could bring compensation for past sorrow—
And to be baffled thus!

JOSEPHINE.

We are not baffled.

WERNER.

Are we not pennyless?

JOSEPHINE.

We ne'er were wealthy.

WERNER.

But I was born to wealth, and rank, and power;
Enjoy'd them, loved them, and, alas! abused them,

And forfeited them by my father's wrath,
In my o'er-fervent youth; but for the abuse
Long sufferings have atoned. My father's death
Left the path open, yet not without snares.
This cold and creeping kinsman, who so long
Kept his eye on me, as the snake upon
The fluttering bird, hath ere this time outstept me,
Become the master of my rights, and lord
Of that which lifts him up to princes in
Dominion and domain.

JOSEPHINE.

Who knows? our son
May have return'd back to his grandsire, and
Even now uphold thy rights for thee?

WERNER.

'Tis hopeless.
Since his strange disappearance from my father's,
Entailing, as it were, my sins upon
Himself, no tidings have reveal'd his course.
I parted with him to his grandsire, on
The promise that his anger would stop short
Of the third generation; but Heaven seems
To claim her stern prerogative, and visit
Upon my boy his father's faults and follies.

JOSEPHINE.

I must hope better still,—at least we have yet
Baffled the long pursuit of Stralenheim.

WERNER.

We should have done, but for this fatal sickness,
More fatal than a mortal malady,

Because it takes not life, but life's sole solace:
Even now I feel my spirit girt about
By the snares of this avaricious fiend;—
How do I know he hath not track'd us here?

JOSEPHINE.

He does not know thy person; and his spies,
Who so long watch'd thee, have been left at Hamburgh.
Our unexpected journey, and this change
Of name, leaves all discovery far behind:
None hold us here for aught save what we seem.

WERNER.

Save what we seem! save what we *are*—sick beggars,
Even to our very hopes.——Ha! ha!

JOSEPHINE.

Alas!
That bitter laugh!

WERNER.

Who would read in this form
The high soul of the son of a long line?
Who, in this garb, the heir of princely lands?
Who, in this sunken, sickly eye, the pride
Of rank and ancestry? in this worn cheek,
And famine-hollow'd brow, the lord of halls,
Which daily feast a thousand vassals?

JOSEPHINE.

You
Ponder'd not thus upon these worldly things,
My Werner! when you deign'd to choose for bride
The foreign daughter of a wandering exile.

WERNER.

An exile's daughter with an outcast son

Were a fit marriage; but I still had hopes
To lift thee to the state we both were born for.
Your father's house was noble, though decay'd;
And worthy by its birth to match with ours.

JOSEPHINE.

Your father did not think so, though 'twas noble;
But had my birth been all my claim to match
With thee, I should have deem'd it what it is.

WERNER.

And what is that in thine eyes?

JOSEPHINE.

All which it
Has done in our behalf,—nothing.

WERNER.

How,—nothing?

JOSEPHINE.

Or worse; for it has been a canker in
Thy heart from the beginning: but for this,
We had not felt our poverty, but as
Millions of myriads feel it, cheerfully;
But for these phantoms of thy feudal fathers,
Thou might'st have earn'd thy bread, as thousands earn it;
Or, if that seem too humble, tried by commerce,
Or other civic means, to amend thy fortunes.

WERNER *(ironically)*.

And been an Hanseatic burgher? Excellent!

JOSEPHINE.

Whate'er thou might'st have been, to me thou art,
What no state high or low can ever change,
My heart's first choice;—which chose thee, knowing neither

Thy birth, thy hopes, thy pride; nought, save thy sorrows:
While they last, let me comfort or divide them;
When they end, let mine end with them, or thee!

WERNER.

My better angel! such I have ever found thee;
This rashness, or this weakness of my temper,
Ne'er raised a thought to injure thee or thine.
Thou didst not mar my fortunes: my own nature
In youth was such as to unmake an empire,
Had such been my inheritance; but now,
Chasten'd, subdued, out-worn, and taught to know
Myself,—to lose this for our son and thee!
Trust me, when, in my two-and-twentieth spring
My father barr'd me from my father's house,
The last sole scion of a thousand sires,
(For I was then the last,) it hurt me less
Than to behold my boy and my boy's mother
Excluded in their innocence from what
My faults deserved exclusion; although then
My passions were all living serpents, and
Twined like the gorgon's round me.

[*A knocking is heard.*

JOSEPHINE.

Hark!

WERNER.

A knocking!

JOSEPHINE.

Who can it be at this lone hour? we have
Few visitors.

WERNER.

And poverty hath none,
Save those who come to make it poorer still.
Well, I am prepared.

[WERNER *puts his hand into his bosom as if to search for some weapon:*

JOSEPHINE.

Oh! do not look so. I
Will to the door, it cannot be of import
In this lone spot of wintry desolation—
The very desert saves man from mankind.

[*She goes to the door.*

Enter IDENSTEIN.

IDENSTEIN.

A fair good evening to my fairer hostess
And worthy——what's your name, my friend?

WERNER.

Are you
Not afraid to demand it?

IDENSTEIN.

Not afraid?
Egad! I am afraid. You look as if
I ask'd for something better than your name,
By the face you put on it.

WERNER.

Better, sir!

IDENSTEIN.

Better or worse, like matrimony, what
Shall I say more? You have been a guest this month

Here in the prince's palace—(to be sure,
His highness had resign'd it to the ghosts
And rats these twelve years—but 'tis still a palace)—
I say you have been our lodger, and as yet
We do not know your name.

WERNER.

My name is Werner.

IDENSTEIN.

A goodly name, a very worthy name
As e'er was gilt upon a trader's board;
I have a cousin in the lazaretto
Of Hamburgh, who has got a wife who bore
The same. He is an officer of trust,
Surgeon's assistant (hoping to be surgeon),
And has done miracles i' the way of business.
Perhaps you are related to my relative?

WERNER.

To yours?

JOSEPHINE.

Oh, yes; we are, but distantly.

[*Aside to* WERNER.

Cannot you humour the dull gossip till
We learn his purpose?

IDENSTEIN.

Well, I'm glad of that;
I thought so all along; such natural yearnings
Play'd round my heart—blood is not water, cousin;
And so let's have some wine, and drink unto
Our better acquaintance: relatives should be
Friends.

WERNER.

You appear to have drank enough already,
And if you had not, I 've no wine to offer,
Else it were yours; but this you know, or should know:
You see I am poor, and sick, and will not see
That I would be alone; but to your business!
What brings you here?

IDENSTEIN.

Why, what should bring me here?

WERNER.

I know not, though I think that I could guess
That which will send you hence.

JOSEPHINE (*aside*).

Patience, dear Werner!

IDENSTEIN.

You don't know what has happen'd, then?

JOSEPHINE.

How should we?

IDENSTEIN.

The river has o'erflow'd.

JOSEPHINE.

Alas! we have known
That to our sorrow, for these five days; since
It keeps us here.

IDENSTEIN.

But what you don't know is,
That a great personage, who fain would cross
Against the stream, and three postillions' wishes,
Is drown'd below the ford, with five post-horses,
A monkey, and a mastiff, and a valet.

JOSEPHINE.

Poor creatures! are you sure?

IDENSTEIN.

Yes, of the monkey,
And the valet, and the cattle; but as yet
We know not if his excellency's dead
Or no; your noblemen are hard to drown,
As it is fit that men in office should be;
But, what is certain is, that he has swallow'd
Enough of the Oder to have burst two peasants;
And now a Saxon and Hungarian traveller,
Who, at their proper peril, snatch'd him from
The whirling river, have sent on to crave
A lodging, or a grave, according as
It may turn out with the live or dead body.

JOSEPHINE.

And where will you receive him? here, I hope,
If we can be of service—say the word.

IDENSTEIN.

Here? no; but in the prince's own apartment,
As fits a noble guest:—'tis damp, no doubt,
Not having been inhabited these twelve years;
But then he comes from a much damper place,
So scarcely will catch cold in't, if he be
Still liable to cold—and if not, why
He 'll be worse lodged to-morrow: ne'ertheless,
I have order'd fire and all appliances
To be got ready for the worst—that is,
In case he should survive.

JOSEPHINE.

Poor gentleman!
I hope he will with all my heart.

WERNER.

Intendant,
Have you not learn'd his name? My Josephine,
[*Aside to his wife.*
Retire, I'll sift this fool. [*Exit* JOSEPHINE.

IDENSTEIN.

His name? oh Lord!
Who knows if he hath now a name or no;
'Tis time enough to ask it when he's able
To give an answer, or if not, to put
His heir's upon his epitaph. Methought
Just now you chid me for demanding names?

WERNER.

True, true, I did so; you say well and wisely.

Enter GABOR.

GABOR.

If I intrude, I crave——

IDENSTEIN.

Oh, no intrusion!
This is the palace; this a stranger like
Yourself; I pray you make yourself at home:
But where's his excellency, and how fares he?

GABOR.

Wetly and wearily, but out of peril;
He paused to change his garments in a cottage,
(Where I doff'd mine for these, and came on hither),

And has almost recover'd from his drenching.
He will be here anon.

IDENSTEIN.

What ho, there! bustle!
Without there, Herman, Weilburg, Peter, Conrad!
[*Gives directions to different servants who enter.*
A nobleman sleeps here to-night—see that
All is in order in the damask chamber—
Keep up the stove—I will myself to the cellar—
And Madame Idenstein (my consort, stranger,)
Shall furnish forth the bed-apparel; for
To say the truth, they are marvellous scant of this
Within the palace precincts, since his highness
Left it some dozen years ago. And then
His excellency will sup, doubtless?

GABOR.

Faith!
I cannot tell; but I should think the pillow
Would please him better than the table after
His soaking in your river: but for fear
Your viands should be thrown away, I mean
To sup myself, and have a friend without
Who will do honour to your good cheer with
A traveller's appetite.

IDENSTEIN.

But are you sure
His excellency——but his name, what is it?

GABOR.

I do not know.

IDENSTEIN.

And yet you saved his life.

GABOR.

I help'd my friend to do so.

IDENSTEIN.

Well, that 's strange,
To save a man's life whom you do not know.

GABOR.

Not so; for there are some I know so well,
I scarce should give myself the trouble.

IDENSTEIN.

Pray,
Good friend, and who may you be?

GABOR.

By my family,
Hungarian.

IDENSTEIN.

Which is call'd?

GABOR.

It matters little.

IDENSTEIN (*aside*).

I think that all the world are grown anonymous,
Since no one cares to tell me what he 's call'd!
Pray, has his excellency a large suite?

GABOR.

Sufficient.

IDENSTEIN.

How many?

GABOR.

I did not count them.
We came up by mere accident, and just
In time to drag him through his carriage window.

IDENSTEIN.

Well, what would I give to save a great man!
No doubt you'll have a swingeing sum as recompense.

GABOR.

Perhaps.

IDENSTEIN.

Now, how much do you reckon on?

GABOR.

I have not yet put up myself to sale:
In the mean time, my best reward would be
A glass of your Hockcheimer, a *green* glass,
Wreath'd with rich grapes and Bacchanal devices,
O'erflowing with the oldest of your vintage;
For which I promise you, in case you e'er
Run hazard of being drown'd, (although I own
It seems, of all deaths, the least likely for you),
I 'll pull you out for nothing. Quick, my friend,
And think, for every bumper I shall quaff,
A wave the less may roll above your head.

IDENSTEIN (*aside*).

I don't much like this fellow—close and dry
He seems, two things which suit me not; however,
Wine he shall have; if that unlocks him not,
I shall not sleep to-night for curiosity. [*Exit* IDENSTEIN.

GABOR (*to* WERNER).

This master of the ceremonies is
The intendant of the palace, I presume;
'Tis a fine building, but decay'd.

WERNER.

The apartment

Design'd for him you rescued will be found
In fitter order for a sickly guest.

GABOR.

I wonder then you occupied it not,
For you seem delicate in health.

WERNER *(quickly)*.

Sir!

GABOR.

Pray
Excuse me: have I said aught to offend you?

WERNER.

Nothing: but we are strangers to each other.

GABOR.

And that 's the reason I would have us less so:
I thought our bustling guest without had said
You were a chance and passing guest, the counterpart
Of me and my companions.

WERNER.

Very true.

GABOR.

Then, as we never met before, and never,
It may be, may again encounter, why,
I thought to cheer up this old dungeon here,
(At least to me), by asking you to share
The fare of my companions and myself.

WERNER.

Pray, pardon me; my health——

GABOR.

Even as you please.
I have been a soldier, and perhaps am blunt
In bearing.

WERNER.

I have also served, and can
Requite a soldier's greeting.

GABOR.

In what service?
The imperial?

WERNER (*quickly, and then interrupting himself*).

I commanded—no—I mean
I served; but it is many years ago,
When first Bohemia raised her banner 'gainst
The Austrian.

GABOR.

Well, that's over now, and peace
Has turn'd some thousand gallant hearts adrift
To live as they best may; and, to say truth,
Some take the shortest.

WERNER.

What is that?

GABOR.

Whate'er
They lay their hands on. All Silesia and
Lusatia's woods are tenanted by bands
Of the late troops, who levy on the country
Their maintenance: the Chatelains must keep
Their castle walls—beyond them 'tis but doubtful
Travel for your rich count or full-blown baron.
My comfort is that, wander where I may,
I've little left to lose now.

WERNER

And I—nothing.

GABOR.

That 's harder still. You say you were a soldier.

WERNER.

I was.

GABOR.

You look one still. All soldiers are
Or should be comrades, even though enemies.
Our swords when drawn must cross, our engines aim
(While levell'd) at each other's hearts; but when
A truce, a peace, or what you will, remits
The steel into its scabbard, and lets sleep
The spark which lights the matchlock, we are brethren.
You are poor and sickly—I am not rich but healthy;
I want for nothing which I cannot want;
You seem devoid of this—wilt share it?

[GABOR *pulls out his purse.*

WERNER.

Who
Told you I was a beggar?

GABOR.

You yourself
In saying you were a soldier during peace-time.

WERNER (*looking at him with suspicion*).

You know me not?

GABOR.

I know no man, not even
Myself: how should I then know one I ne'er
Beheld till half an hour since?

WERNER.

Sir, I thank you.
Your offer 's noble were it to a friend,

And not unkind as to an unknown stranger,
Though scarcely prudent; but no less I thank you.
I am a beggar in all save his trade,
And when I beg of any one it shall be
Of him who was the first to offer what
Few can obtain by asking. Pardon me.

[*Exit* WERNER.

GABOR (*solus*).

A goodly fellow by his looks, though worn,
As most good fellows are, by pain or pleasure,
Which tear life out of us before our time:
I scarce know which most quickly; but he seems
To have seen better days, as who has not
Who has seen yesterday?—But here approaches
Our sage intendant, with the wine; however,
For the cup's sake, I'll bear the cup-bearer.

Enter IDENSTEIN.

IDENSTEIN.

'Tis here! the supernaculum! twenty years
Of age, if 'tis a day.

GABOR.

Which epoch makes
Young women and old wine, and 'tis great pity
Of two such excellent things, increase of years,
Which still improves the one, should spoil the other.
Fill full—Here 's to our hostess—your fair wife.

[*Takes the glass.*

IDENSTEIN.

Fair!—Well, I trust your taste in wine is equal

To that you show for beauty; but I pledge you
Nevertheless.

GABOR.

Is not the lovely woman
I met in the adjacent hall, who, with
An air, and port, and eye, which would have better
Beseem'd this palace in its brightest days,
(Though in a garb adapted to its present
Abandonment), return'd my salutation—
Is not the same your spouse?

IDENSTEIN.

I would she were!
But you 're mistaken—that 's the stranger's wife.

GABOR.

And by her aspect she might be a prince's:
Though time hath touch'd her too, she still retains
Much beauty, and more majesty.

IDENSTEIN.

And that
Is more than I can say for Madame Idenstein,
At least in beauty: as for majesty,
She has some of its properties which might
Be spared—but never mind!

GABOR.

I don't. But who
May be this stranger? He too hath a bearing
Above his outward fortunes.

IDENSTEIN.

There I differ.
He 's poor as Job, and not so patient; but

Who he may be, or what, or aught of him,
Except his name, (and that I only learn'd
To-night), I know not.

GABOR.

But how came he here?

IDENSTEIN.

In a most miserable old caleche,
About a month since, and immediately
Fell sick, almost to death. He should have died.

GABOR.

Tender and true!—but why?

IDENSTEIN.

Why, what is life
Without a living? He has not a stiver.

GABOR.

In that case, I much wonder that a person
Of your apparent prudence should admit
Guests so forlorn into this noble mansion.

IDENSTEIN.

That's true; but pity, as you know, *does* make
One's heart commit these follies; and besides,
They had some valuables left at that time,
Which paid their way up to the present hour,
And so I thought they might as well be lodged
Here as at the small tavern, and I gave them
The run of some of the oldest palace rooms.
They served to air them, at the least as long
As they could pay for fire wood.

GABOR.

Poor souls!

IDENSTEIN.

Ay,
Exceeding poor.

GABOR.

And yet unused to poverty,
If I mistake not. Whither were they going?

IDENSTEIN.

Oh! Heaven knows where, unless to heaven itself.
Some days ago that look'd the likeliest journey
For Werner.

GABOR.

Werner! I have heard the name,
But it may be a feign'd one.

IDENSTEIN.

Like enough!
But hark! a noise of wheels and voices, and
A blaze of torches from without. As sure
As destiny, his excellency 's come.
I must be at my post: will you not join me,
To help him from his carriage, and present
Your humble duty at the door?

GABOR.

I dragg'd him
From out that carriage when he would have given
His barony or county to repel
The rushing river from his gurgling throat.
He has valets now enough: they stood aloof then,
Shaking their dripping ears upon the shore,
All roaring, "Help!" but offering none; and as
For *duty* (as you call it) I did mine *then*,
Now do *yours*. Hence, and bow and cringe him here!

IDENSTEIN.

I cringe!—but I shall lose the opportunity—
Plague take it! he 'll be *here*, and I *not there!*

[*Exit* IDENSTEIN, *hastily.*

Re-enter WERNER.

WERNER (*to himself*).

I heard a noise of wheels and voices. How
All sounds now jar me!
(*Perceiving* GABOR). Still here! Is he not
A spy of my pursuer's? His frank offer,
So suddenly, and to a stranger, wore
The aspect of a secret enemy;
For friends are slow at such.

GABOR.

Sir, you seem rapt,
And yet the time is not akin to thought.
These old walls will be noisy soon. The baron,
Or count, (or whatsoe'er this half-drown'd noble
May be), for whom this desolate village, and
Its lone inhabitants, show more respect
Than did the elements, is come.

IDENSTEIN (*without*).

This way—
This way, your excellency:—have a care,
The staircase is a little gloomy, and
Somewhat decay'd; but if we had expected
So high a guest—pray take my arm, my lord!

Enter STRALENHEIM, IDENSTEIN, *and attendants, partly his own, and partly retainers of the domain, of which* IDENSTEIN *is Intendant.*

STRALENHEIM.

I'll rest me here a moment.

IDENSTEIN (*to the servants*).

Ho! a chair!
Instantly, knaves! [STRALENHEIM *sits down.*

WERNER (*aside*).

'Tis he!

STRALENHEIM.

I'm better now.
Who are these strangers?

IDENSTEIN.

Please you, my good lord,
One says he is no stranger.

WERNER (*aloud and hastily*).

Who says that?
[*They look at him with surprise.*

IDENSTEIN.

Why, no one spoke *of you*, or *to you!*—but
Here's one his excellency may be pleased
To recognise. [*Pointing to* GABOR.

GABOR.

I seek not to disturb
His noble memory.

STRALENHEIM.

I apprehend
This is one of the strangers to whose aid
I owe my rescue. Is not that the other?
[*Pointing to* WERNER.

My state, when I was succour'd, must excuse
My uncertainty to whom I owe so much.

IDENSTEIN.

He!—no, my lord! he rather wants for rescue
Than can afford it. 'Tis a poor sick man,
Travel-tired, and lately risen from a bed,
From whence he never dream'd to rise.

STRALENHEIM.

Methought
That there were two.

GABOR.

There were, in company;
But, in the service render'd to your lordship,
I needs must say but *one*, and he is absent.
The chief part of whatever aid was render'd,
Was *his:* it was his fortune to be first.
My will was not inferior, but his strength
And youth outstripp'd me; therefore do not waste
Your thanks on me. I was but a glad second
Unto a nobler principal.

STRALENHEIM.

Where is he?

AN ATTENDANT.

My lord, he tarried in the cottage, where
Your excellency rested for an hour,
And said he would be here to-morrow.

STRALENHEIM.

Till
That hour arrives, I can but offer thanks,
And then——

GABOR.

I seek no more, and scarce deserve
So much. My comrade may speak for himself.

STRALENHEIM (*fixing his eyes upon* WERNER, *then aside*).

It cannot be! and yet he must be look'd to.
'Tis twenty years since I beheld him with
These eyes; and, though my agents still have kept
Theirs on him, policy has held aloof
My own from his, not to alarm him into
Suspicion of my plan. Why did I leave
At Hamburgh those who would have made assurance
If this be he or no? I thought, ere now,
To have been lord of Siegendorf, and parted
In haste, though even the elements appear
To fight against me, and this sudden flood
May keep me prisoner here till——

[*He pauses, and looks at* WERNER; *then resumes.*

This man must
Be watch'd. If it is he, he is so changed,
His father, rising from his grave again,
Would pass him by unknown. I must be wary;
An error would spoil all.

IDENSTEIN.

Your lordship seems
Pensive. Will it not please you to pass on?

STRALENHEIM.

'Tis past fatigue which gives my weigh'd-down spirit
An outward show of thought. I will to rest.

IDENSTEIN.

The prince's chamber is prepared, with all

The very furniture the prince used when
Last here, in its full splendour.
(*Aside*). Somewhat tatter'd,
And devilish damp, but fine enough by torch-light;
And that 's enough for your right noble blood
Of twenty quarterings upon a hatchment;
So let their bearer sleep 'neath something like one
Now, as he one day will for ever lie.

STRALENHEIM (*rising, and turning to* GABOR).

Good night, good people! Sir, I trust to-morrow
Will find me apter to requite your service.
In the meantime, I crave your company
A moment in my chamber.

GABOR.

I attend you.

STRALENHEIM (*after a few steps, pauses, and calls* WERNER).

Friend!

WERNER.

Sir!

IDENSTEIN.

Sir! Lord—oh, Lord! Why don't you say
His lordship, or his excellency? Pray,
My lord, excuse this poor man's want of breeding:
He hath not been accustom'd to admission
To such a presence.

STRALENHEIM (*to* IDENSTEIN).

Peace, intendant!

IDENSTEIN.

Oh!
I am dumb.

STRALENHEIM (*to* WERNER).

Have you been long here?

WERNER.

Long?

STRALENHEIM.

I sought

An answer, not an echo.

WERNER.

You may seek

Both from the walls. I am not used to answer
Those whom I know not.

STRALENHEIM.

Indeed! Ne'er the less,

You might reply with courtesy, to what
Is ask'd in kindness.

WERNER.

When I know it such,

I will requite—that is, *reply*—in unison.

STRALENHEIM.

The intendant said, you had been detain'd by sickness—
If I could aid you—journeying the same way?

WERNER (*quickly*).

I am not journeying the same way!

STRALENHEIM.

How know ye

That, ere you know my route?

WERNER.

Because there is

But one way that the rich and poor must tread
Together. You diverged from that dread path
Some hours ago, and I some days; henceforth

Our roads must lie asunder, though they tend
All to one home.

STRALENHEIM.

Your language is above
Your station.

WERNER (*bitterly*).

Is it?

STRALENHEIM.

Or, at least, beyond
Your garb.

WERNER.

'Tis well that it is not beneath it,
As sometimes happens to the better clad.
But, in a word, what would you with me?

STRALENHEIM (*startled*).

I?

WERNER.

Yes—you! You know me not, and question me,
And wonder that I answer not—not knowing
My inquisitor. Explain what you would have,
And then I'll satisfy yourself, or me.

STRALENHEIM.

I knew not that you had reasons for reserve.

WERNER.

Many have such:—Have you none?

STRALENHEIM.

None which can
Interest a mere stranger.

WERNER.

Then forgive

The same unknown and humble stranger, if
He wishes to remain so to the man
Who can have nought in common with him.

STRALENHEIM.

Sir,
I will nc balk your humour, though untoward:
I only meant you service—but, good night!
Intendant, show the way! (*to* GABOR). Sir, you will with me?

[*Exeunt* STRALENHEIM *and Attendants;* IDENSTEIN *and* GABOR.

WERNER (*solus*).

'Tis he! I am taken in the toils. Before
I quitted Hamburgh, Giulio, his late steward,
Inform'd me, that he had obtain'd an order
From Brandenburgh's elector, for the arrest
Of Kruitzner (such the name I then bore,) when
I came upon the frontier; the free city
Alone preserved my freedom—till I left
Its walls—fool that I was to quit them! But
I deem'd this humble garb, and route obscure,
Had baffled the slow hounds in their pursuit.
What's to be done? He knows me not by person;
Nor could aught, save the eye of apprehension,
Have recognised *him,* after twenty years,
We met so rarely and so coldly in
Our youth. But those about him! Now I can
Divine the frankness of the Hungarian, who,
No doubt, is a mere tool and spy of Stralenheim's,
To sound and to secure me. Without means!

Sick, poor—begirt too with the flooding rivers,
Impassable even to the wealthy, with
All the appliances which purchase modes
Of overpowering peril with men's lives,—
How can I hope! An hour ago methought
My state beyond despair; and now, 'tis such,
The past seems paradise. Another day,
And I 'm detected,—on the very eve
Of honours, rights, and my inheritance,
When a few drops of gold might save me still
In favouring an escape.

Enter IDENSTEIN *and* FRITZ, *in conversation.*

FRITZ.

Immediately.

IDENSTEIN.

I tell you, 'tis impossible.

FRITZ.

It must
Be tried, however; and if one express
Fail, you must send on others, till the answer
Arrives from Frankfort, from the commandant.

IDENSTEIN.

I will do what I can.

FRITZ.

And recollect
To spare no trouble; you will be repaid
Tenfold.

IDENSTEIN.

The baron is retired to rest?

FRITZ.

He hath thrown himself into an easy chair
Beside the fire, and slumbers; and has order'd
He may not be disturb'd until eleven,
When he will take himself to bed.

IDENSTEIN.

Before
An hour is past I'll do my best to serve him.

FRITZ.

Remember! [*Exit* FRITZ.

IDENSTEIN.

The devil take these great men! they
Think all things made for them. Now here must I
Rouse up some half a dozen shivering vassals
From their scant pallets, and, at peril of
Their lives, despatch them o'er the river towards
Frankfort. Methinks the baron's own experience
Some hours ago might teach him fellow-feeling:
But no, "it *must*," and there's an end. How now?
Are you there, Mynheer Werner?

WERNER.

You have left
Your noble guest right quickly.

IDENSTEIN.

Yes—he's dozing,
And seems to like that none should sleep besides.
Here is a packet for the commandant
Of Frankfort, at all risks and all expenses;
But I must not lose time: Good night!
[*Exit* IDENSTEIN.

WERNER.

" To Frankfort!'

So, so, it thickens! Ay, " the commandant."
This tallies well with all the prior steps
Of this cool calculating fiend, who walks
Between me and my father's house. No doubt
He writes for a detachment to convey me
Into some secret fortress.—Sooner than
This——

[WERNER *looks around, and snatches up a knife lying on a table in a recess.*

Now I am master of myself at least.
Hark,—footsteps! How do I know that Stralenheim
Will wait for even the show of that authority
Which is to overshadow usurpation?
That he suspects me's certain. I'm alone;
He with a numerous train. I weak; he strong
In gold, in numbers, rank, authority.
I nameless, or involving in my name
Destruction, till I reach my own domain;
He full blown with his titles, which impose
Still further on these obscure petty burghers
Than they could do elsewhere. Hark! nearer still!
I'll to the secret passage, which communicates
With the——No! all is silent—'twas my fancy!—
Still as the breathless interval between
The flash and thunder:—I must hush my soul
Amidst its perils. Yet I will retire,
To see if still be unexplored the passage

I wot of: it will serve me as a den
Of secrecy for some hours, at the worst.

[WERNER *draws a pannel, and exit, closing it after him.*

Enter GABOR *and* JOSEPHINE.

GABOR.

Where is your husband?

JOSEPHINE.

Here, I thought: I left him
Not long since in his chamber. But these rooms
Have many outlets, and he may be gone
To accompany the intendant.

GABOR.

Baron Stralenheim
Put many questions to the intendant on
The subject of your lord, and, to be plain,
I have my doubts if he means well.

JOSEPHINE.

Alas!
What can there be in common with the proud
And wealthy baron and the unknown Werner?

GABOR.

That you know best.

JOSEPHINE.

Or, if it were so, how
Come you to stir yourself in his behalf,
Rather than that of him whose life you saved?

GABOR.

I help'd to save him, as in peril; but

I did not pledge myself to serve him in
Oppression. I know well these nobles, and
Their thousand modes of trampling on the poor.
I have proved them; and my spirit boils up when
I find them practising against the weak:—
This is my only motive.

JOSEPHINE.

It would be
Not easy to persuade my consort of
Your good intentions.

GABOR.

Is he so suspicious?

JOSEPHINE.

He was not once; but time and troubles have
Made him what you beheld.

GABOR.

I'm sorry for it.
Suspicion is a heavy armour, and
With its own weight impedes more than protects.
Good night. I trust to meet with him at daybreak.

[*Exit* GABOR.

Re-enter IDENSTEIN *and some Peasants.* JOSEPHINE *retires up the Hall.*

FIRST PEASANT.

But if I 'm drown'd?

IDENSTEIN.

Why, you will be well paid for't,
And have risk'd more than drowning for as much,
I doubt not.

SECOND PEASANT.

But our wives and families?

IDENSTEIN.

Cannot be worse off than they are, and may
Be better.

THIRD PEASANT.

I have neither, and will venture.

IDENSTEIN.

That's right. A gallant carle, and fit to be
A soldier. I'll promote you to the ranks
In the prince's body guard—if you succeed;
And you shall have besides in sparkling coin
Two thalers.

THIRD PEASANT.

No more!

IDENSTEIN.

Out upon your avarice!
Can that low vice alloy so much ambition?
I tell thee, fellow, that two thalers in
Small change will subdivide into a treasure.
Do not five hundred thousand heroes daily
Risk lives and souls for the tithe of one thaler?
When had you half the sum?

THIRD PEASANT.

Never—but ne'er
The less I must have three.

IDENSTEIN.

Have you forgot
Whose vassal you were born, knave?

THIRD PEASANT.

No—the prince's,
And not the stranger's.

IDENSTEIN.

Sirrah! in the prince's
Absence, I 'm sovereign; and the baron is
My intimate connexion:—" Cousin Idenstein!
(Quoth he) you 'll order out a dozen vilains."
And so, you villains! troop—march—march, I say:
And if a single dog's ear of this packet
Be sprinkled by the Oder—look to it!
For every page of paper, shall a hide
Of yours be stretch'd as parchment on a drum,
Like Ziska's skin, to beat alarm to all
Refractory vassals, who can not effect
Impossibilities—Away, ye earth-worms!

[*Exit, driving them out.*

JOSEPHINE (*coming forward*).

I fain would shun these scenes, too oft repeated,
Of feudal tyranny o'er petty victims;
I cannot aid, and will not witness such.
Even here, in this remote, unnamed, dull spot,
The dimmest in the district's map, exist
The insolence of wealth in poverty
O'er something poorer still—the pride of rank
In servitude, o'er something still more servile;
And vice in misery affecting still
A tatter'd splendour. What a state of being!
In Tuscany, my own dear sunny land,
Our nobles were but citizens and merchants,

Like Cosmo. We had evils, but not such
As these; and our all-ripe and gushing valleys
Made poverty more cheerful, where each herb
Was in itself a meal, and every vine
Rain'd, as it were, the beverage, which makes glad
The heart of man; and the ne'er unfelt sun
(But rarely clouded, and when clouded, leaving
His warmth behind in memory of his beams),
Makes the worn mantle, and the thin robe, less
Oppressive than an emperor's jewell'd purple.
But, here! the despots of the north appear
To imitate the ice-wind of their clime,
Searching the shivering vassal through his rags,
To wring his soul—as the bleak elements
His form. And 'tis to be amongst these sovereigns
My husband pants! and such his pride of birth—
That twenty years of usage, such as no
Father, born in a humble state, could nerve
His soul to persecute a son withal,
Hath changed no atom of his early nature;
But I, born nobly also, from my father's
Kindness was taught a different lesson. Father!
May thy long-tried, and now rewarded spirit,
Look down on us and our so long desired
Ulric! I love my son, as thou didst me!
What's that? Thou, Werner! can it be? and thus.

Enter WERNER *hastily, with the knife in his hand, by the secret pannel, which he closes hurriedly after him.*

WERNER (*not at first recognising her*).

Discovered! then I 'll stab——(*recognising her*).
Ah! Josephine,
Why art thou not at rest?

JOSEPHINE.

What rest? My God!
What doth this mean?

WERNER (*showing a rouleau*).

Here's *gold—gold*, Josephine,
Will rescue us from this detested dungeon.

JOSEPHINE.

And how obtain'd?—that knife!

WERNER.

'Tis bloodless—*yet*.
Away—we must to our chamber.

JOSEPHINE.

But whence com'st thou?

WERNER.

Ask not! but let us think where we shall go—
This—this will make us way—(*showing the gold*)—
I'll fit them now.

JOSEPHINE.

I dare not think thee guilty of dishonour.

WERNER.

Dishonour!

JOSEPHINE.

I have said it.

WERNER.

Let us hence:
'Tis the last night, I trust, that we need pass here.

JOSEPHINE.

And not the worst, I hope.

WERNER.

Hope! I make *sure*.
But let us to our chamber.

JOSEPHINE.

Yet one question—
What hast thou *done?*

WERNER (*fiercely*).

Left one thing *undone*, which
Had made all well: let me not think of it!
Away!

JOSEPHINE.

Alas, that I should doubt of thee!

[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.—SCENE I.

A Hall in the same Palace.

Enter IDENSTEIN, *and Others.*

IDENSTEIN.

Fine doings! goodly doings! honest doings!
A baron pillaged in a prince's palace!
Where, till this hour, such a sin ne'er was heard of.

FRITZ.

It hardly could, unless the rats despoil'd
The mice of a few shreds of tapestry.

IDENSTEIN.

Oh! that I ere should live to see this day!
The honour of our city's gone for ever.

FRITZ.

Well, but now to discover the delinquent:
The baron is determined not to lose
This sum without a search.

IDENSTEIN.

And so am I.

FRITZ.

But whom do you suspect?

IDENSTEIN.

Suspect! all people
Without—within—above—below—Heaven help me!

FRITZ.

Is there no other entrance to the chamber?

IDENSTEIN.

None whatsoever.

FRITZ.

Are you sure of that?

IDENSTEIN.

Certain. I have lived and served here since my birth,
And if there were such, must have heard of such,
Or seen it.

FRITZ.

Then it must be some one who
Had access to the antechamber.

IDENSTEIN.

Doubtless.

FRITZ.

The man call'd *Werner*'s poor!

IDENSTEIN.

Poor as a miser,
But lodged so far off, in the other wing,
By which there 's no communication with
The baron's chamber, that it can't be he:
Besides, I bade him "good night" in the hall,
Almost a mile off, and which only leads
To his own apartment, about the same time
When this burglarious, larcenous felony
Appears to have been committed.

FRITZ.

There 's another,
The stranger——

IDENSTEIN.

The Hungarian?

FRITZ.

He who help'd
To fish the baron from the Oder.

IDENSTEIN.

Not
Unlikely. But, hold—might it not have been
One of the suite?

FRITZ.

How? *We*, Sir!

IDENSTEIN.

No—not *you*,
But some of the inferior knaves. You say
The baron was asleep in the great chair—
The velvet chair—in his embroider'd night-gown;
His toilet spread before him, and upon it
A cabinet with letters, papers, and
Several rouleaux of gold; of which *one* only
Has disappear'd:—the door unbolted, with
No difficult access to any.

FRITZ.

Good Sir,
Be not so quick; the honour of the corps,
Which forms the baron's household,'s unimpeach'd
From steward to scullion, save in the fair way
Of peculation; such as in accompts,
Weights, measures, larder, cellar, buttery,
Where all men take their prey; as also in
Postage of letters, gathering of rents,

Purveying feasts, and understanding with
The honest trades who furnish noble masters:
But for your petty, picking, downright thievery,
We scorn it as we do board-wages: then
Had one of our folks done it, he would not
Have been so poor a spirit as to hazard
His neck for *one* rouleau, but have swoop'd all;
Also the cabinet, if portable.

IDENSTEIN.

There is some sense in that——

FRITZ.

No, Sir; be sure
'Twas none of our corps; but some petty, trivial
Picker and stealer, without art or genius.
The only question is—Who else could have
Access, save the Hungarian and yourself?

IDENSTEIN.

You don't mean me?

FRITZ.

No, Sir; I honour more
Your talents——

IDENSTEIN.

And my principles, I hope.

FRITZ.

Of course. But to the point: What's to be done?

IDENSTEIN.

Nothing—but there's a good deal to be said.
We'll offer a reward; move heaven and earth,
And the police (though there's none nearer than
Frankfort); post notices in manuscript

(For we 've no printer); and set by my clerk
To read them (for few can, save he and I).
We'll send out vilains to strip beggars, and
Search empty pockets; also, to arrest
All gipsies, and ill-clothed and sallow people.
Prisoners we'll have at least, if not the culprit;
And for the baron's gold—if 'tis not found,
At least he shall have the full satisfaction
Of melting twice its substance in the raising
The ghost of this rouleau. Here's alchymy
For your lord's losses!

FRITZ.

He hath found a better.

IDENSTEIN.

Where?

FRITZ.

In a most immense inheritance.
The late Count Siegendorf, his distant kinsman,
Is dead near Prague, in his castle, and my lord
Is on his way to take possession.

IDENSTEIN.

Was there
No heir?

FRITZ.

Oh, yes; but he has disappear'd
Long from the world's eye, and perhaps the world.
A prodigal son, beneath his father's ban
For the last twenty years; for whom his sire
Refused to kill the fatted calf; and, therefore,
If living, he must chew the husks still. But

The baron would find means to silence him,
Were he to re-appear: he's politic,
And has much influence with a certain court.

IDENSTEIN.

He's fortunate.

FRITZ.

'Tis true, there is a grandson,
Whom the late count reclaim'd from his son's hands,
And educated as his heir; but then
His birth is doubtful.

IDENSTEIN.

How so?

FRITZ.

His sire made
A left-hand, love, imprudent sort of marriage,
With an Italian exile's dark-eyed daughter:
Noble, they say, too; but no match for such
A house as Siegendorf's. The grandsire ill
Could brook the alliance; and could ne'er be brought
To see the parents, though he took the son.

IDENSTEIN.

If he's a lad of mettle, he may yet
Dispute your claim, and weave a web that may
Puzzle your baron to unravel.

FRITZ.

Why,
For mettle, he has quite enough: they say,
He forms a happy mixture of his sire
And grandsire's qualities,—impetuous as
The former, and deep as the latter; but

The strangest is, that he too disappear'd
Some months ago.

IDENSTEIN.

The devil he did!

FRITZ.

Why, yes:
It must have been at his suggestion, at
An hour so critical as was the eve
Of the old man's death, whose heart was broken by it.

IDENSTEIN.

Was there no cause assign'd?

FRITZ.

Plenty, no doubt,
And none perhaps the true one. Some averr'd
It was to seek his parents; some because
The old man held his spirit in so strictly
(But that could scarce be, for he doted on him);
A third believed he wish'd to serve in war,
But peace being made soon after his departure,
He might have since return'd, were that the motive;
A fourth set charitably have surmised,
As there was something strange and mystic in him,
That in the wild exuberance of his nature,
He had join'd the black bands, who lay waste Lusatia,
The mountains of Bohemia and Silesia,
Since the last years of war had dwindled into
A kind of general condottiero system
Of bandit warfare; each troop with its chief,
And all against mankind.

IDENSTEIN.

That cannot be.

A young heir, bred to wealth and luxury,
To risk his life and honours with disbanded
Soldiers and desperadoes!

FRITZ.

. . Heaven best knows!
But there are human natures so allied
Unto the savage love of enterprize,
That they will seek for peril as a pleasure.
I've heard that nothing can reclaim your Indian,
Or tame the tiger, though their infancy
Were fed on milk and honey. After all,
Your Wallenstein, your Tilly and Gustavus,
Your Bannier, and your Torstenson and Weimar,
Were but the same thing upon a grand scale;
And now that they are gone, and peace proclaim'd,
They who would follow the same pastime must
Pursue it on their own account. Here comes
The baron, and the Saxon stranger, who
Was his chief aid in yesterday's escape,
But did not leave the cottage by the Oder
Until this morning.

Enter STRALENHEIM *and* ULRIC.

STRALENHEIM.

Since you have refused
All compensation, gentle stranger, save
Inadequate thanks, you almost check even them,
Making me feel the worthlessness of words,
And blush at my own barren gratitude,
They seem so niggardly compared with what
Your courteous courage did in my behalf.

ULRIC.

I pray you press the theme no further.

STRALENHEIM.

But
Can I not serve you? You are young, and of
That mould which throws out heroes; fair in favour;
Brave, I know, by my living now to say so,
And, doubtlessly, with such a form and heart,
Would look into the fiery eyes of war,
As ardently for glory as you dared
An obscure death to save an unknown stranger
In an as perilous, but opposite element.
You are made for the service: I have served;
Have rank by birth and soldiership, and friends,
Who shall be yours. 'Tis true, this pause of peace
Favours such views at present scantily;
But 'twill not last, men's spirits are too stirring;
And, after thirty years of conflict, peace
Is but a petty war, as the times show us
In every forest, or a mere arm'd truce.
War will reclaim his own; and, in the meantime,
You might obtain a post, which would ensure
A higher soon, and, by my influence, fail not
To rise. I speak of Brandenburg, wherein
I stand well with the elector; in Bohemia,
Like you, I am a stranger, and we are now
Upon its frontier.

ULRIC.

You perceive my garb
Is Saxon, and of course my service due

To my own sovereign. If I must decline
Your offer, 'tis with the same feeling which
Induced it.

STRALENHEIM.

Why, this is mere usury!
I owe my life to you, and you refuse
The acquittance of the interest of the debt,
To heap more obligations on me, till
I bow beneath them.

ULRIC.

You shall say so when
I claim the payment.

STRALENHEIM.

Well, Sir, since you will not—
You are nobly born?

ULRIC.

I've heard my kinsmen say so.

STRALENHEIM.

Your actions show it. Might I ask your name?

ULRIC.

Ulric.

STRALENHEIM.

Your house's?

ULRIC.

When I 'm worthy of it,
I 'll answer you.

STRALENHEIM (*aside*).

Most probably an Austrian,
Whom these unsettled times forbid to boast
His lineage on these wild and dangerous frontiers,

Where the name of his country is abhorr'd.

[*Aloud to* FRITZ *and* IDENSTEIN.

So, Sirs! how have ye sped in your researches?

IDENSTEIN.

Indifferent well, your excellency.

STRALENHEIM.

Then

I am to deem the plunderer is caught?

IDENSTEIN.

Humph!—not exactly.

STRALENHEIM.

Or at least suspected?

IDENSTEIN.

Oh! for that matter very much suspected.

STRALENHEIM.

Who may he be?

IDENSTEIN.

Why, don't *you* know, my lord?

STRALENHEIM.

How should I? I was fast asleep.

IDENSTEIN.

And so

Was I, and that's the cause I know no more
Than does your excellency.

STRALENHEIM.

Dolt!

IDENSTEIN.

Why, if

Your lordship, being robb'd, don't recognise
The rogue; how should I, not being robb'd, identify

The thief among so many? In the crowd,
May it please your excellency, your thief looks
Exactly like the rest, or rather better:
'Tis only at the bar and in the dungeon
That wise men know your felon by his features;
But I'll engage, that if seen there but once,
Whether he be found criminal or no,
His face shall be so.

STRALENHEIM (*to* FRITZ).

Prithee, Fritz, inform me
What hath been done to trace the fellow?

FRITZ.

Faith!
My lord, not much as yet, except conjecture.

STRALENHEIM.

Besides the loss, (which, I must own, affects me
Just now materially), I needs would find
The villain out of public motives; for
So dexterous a spoiler, who could creep
Through my attendants, and so many peopled
And lighted chambers on my rest, and snatch
The gold before my scarce closed eyes, would soon
Leave bare your borough, Sir Intendant!

IDENSTEIN.

True;
If there were aught to carry off, my lord.

ULRIC.

What is all this?

STRALENHEIM.

You join'd us but this morning,
And have not heard that I was robb'd last night.

ULRIC.

Some rumour of it reach'd me as I pass'd
The outer chambers of the palace, but
I know no further.

STRALENHEIM.

It is a strange business:
The intendant can inform you of the facts.

IDENSTEIN.

Most willingly. You see——

STRALENHEIM (*impatiently*).

Defer your tale,
Till certain of the hearer's patience.

IDENSTEIN.

That
Can only be approved by proofs. You see——

STRALENHEIM (*again interrupting him, and addressing* ULRIC).

In short, I was asleep upon a chair,
My cabinet before me, with some gold
Upon it, (more than I much like to lose,
Though in part only): some ingenious person
Contrived to glide through all my own attendants,
Besides those of the place, and bore away
An hundred golden ducats, which to find
I would be fain, and there 's an end; perhaps
You (as I still am rather faint), would add
To yesterday's great obligation, this,
Though slighter, yet not slight, to aid these men
(Who seem but lukewarm) in recovering it?

ULRIC.

Most willingly, and without loss of time—
(*To* IDENSTEIN.) Come hither, Mynheer!

IDENSTEIN.

But so much haste bodes
Right little speed, and——

ULRIC.

Standing motionless
None; so let's march, we'll talk as we go on.

IDENSTEIN.

But——

ULRIC.

Show the spot, and then I'll answer you.

FRITZ.

I will, Sir, with his excellency's leave.

STRALENHEIM.

Do so, and take yon old ass with you.

FRITZ.

Hence!

ULRIC.

Come on, old oracle, expound thy riddle!

[*Exit with* IDENSTEIN *and* FRITZ.

STRALENHEIM (*solus*).

A stalwart, active, soldier-looking stripling,
Handsome as Hercules ere his first labour,
And with a brow of thought beyond his years
When in repose, till his eye kindles up
In answering yours. I wish I could engage him:
I have need of some such spirits near me now,
For this inheritance is worth a struggle.

And though I am not the man to yield without one,
Neither are they who now rise up between me
And my desire. The boy, they say, 's a bold one;
But he hath play'd the truant in some hour
Of freakish folly, leaving fortune to
Champion his claims: that 's well. The father, whom
For years I 've track'd, as does the blood-hound, never
In sight, but constantly in scent, had put me
To fault, but *here* I *have* him, and that 's better.
It must be *he!* All circumstance proclaims it;
And careless voices, knowing not the cause
Of my inquiries, still confirm it—Yes!
The man, his bearing, and the mystery
Of his arrival, and the time; the account, too,
The intendant gave (for I have not beheld her)
Of his wife's dignified but foreign aspect;
Besides the antipathy with which we met,
As snakes and lions shrink back from each other
By secret instinct that both must be foes
Deadly, without being natural prey to either;
All—all—confirm it to my mind: however,
We 'll grapple, ne'ertheless. In a few hours
The order comes from Frankfort, if these waters
Rise not the higher, (and the weather favours
Their quick abatement), and I 'll have him safe
Within a dungeon, where he may avouch
His real estate and name; and there 's no harm done,
Should he prove other than I deem. This robbery,
(Save for the actual loss), is lucky also:
He 's poor, and that 's suspicious—he 's unknown,

And that's defenceless,—true, we have no proofs
Of guilt, but what hath he of innocence?
Were he a man indifferent to my prospects,
In other bearings, I should rather lay
The inculpation on the Hungarian, who
Hath something which I like not; and alone
Of all around, except the intendant, and
The prince's household and my own, had ingress
Familiar to the chamber.

Enter GABOR.

Friend, how fare you?

GABOR.

As those who fare well every where, when they
Have supt and slumber'd, no great matter how—
And you, my lord?

STRALENHEIM.

Better in rest than purse:
Mine inn is like to cost me dear.

GABOR.

I heard
Of your late loss; but 'tis a trifle to
One of your order.

STRALENHEIM.

You would hardly think so,
Were the loss yours.

GABOR.

I never had so much
(At once) in my whole life, and therefore am not
Fit to decide. But I came here to seek you.

Your couriers are turn'd back—I have outstript them,
In my return.

STRALENHEIM.

You!—Why?

GABOR.

I went at day-break,
To watch for the abatement of the river,
As being anxious to resume my journey.
Your messengers were all check'd like myself;
And, seeing the case hopeless, I await
The current's pleasure.

STRALENHEIM.

Would the dogs were in it!
Why did they not, at least, attempt the passage?
I order'd this at all risks.

GABOR.

Could you order
The Oder to divide, as Moses did
The Red Sea (scarcely redder than the flood
Of the swoln stream), and be obey'd, perhaps
They might have ventured.

STRALENHEIM.

I must see to it:
The knaves! the slaves!—but they shall smart for this.
[*Exit* STRALENHEIM.

GABOR (*solus*).

There goes my noble, feudal, self-will'd baron!
Epitomè of what brave chivalry
The preux chevaliers of the good old times
Have left us. Yesterday he would have given

His lands (if he hath any), and, still dearer,
His sixteen quarterings, for as much fresh air
As would have filled a bladder, while he lay
Gurgling and foaming half way through the window
Of his o'erset and water-logg'd conveyance,
And now he storms at half a dozen wretches
Because they love their lives too! Yet, he's right:
'Tis strange they should, when such as he may put them
To hazard at his pleasure. Oh! thou world!
Thou art indeed a melancholy jest! [*Exit* GABOR.

SCENE II.

The Apartment of WERNER, *in the Palace.*

Enter JOSEPHINE *and* ULRIC.

JOSEPHINE.

Stand back, and let me look on thee again!
My Ulric!—my beloved!—can it be—
After twelve years?

ULRIC.

My dearest mother!

JOSEPHINE.

Yes!
My dream is realized—how beautiful—
How more than all I sigh'd for! Heaven receive
A mother's thanks!—a mother's tears of joy!
This is indeed thy work!—At such an hour, too,
He comes not only as a son but saviour.

ULRIC.

If such a joy await me, it must double
What I now feel, and lighten, from my heart,
A part of the long debt of duty, not
Of love, (for that was ne'er withheld)—forgive me!
This long delay was not my fault.

JOSEPHINE.

I know it,
But cannot think of sorrow now, and doubt
If I e'er felt it, 'tis so dazzled from
My memory, by this oblivious transport!—
My son!

Enter WERNER.

WERNER.

What have we here, more strangers?

JOSEPHINE.

No!
Look upon him! What do you see?

WERNER.

A stripling,
For the first time——

ULRIC (*kneeling*).

For twelve long years, my father!

WERNER.

Oh, God!

JOSEPHINE.

He faints!

WERNER.

No—I am better now—
Ulric! (*Embraces him*).

ULRIC.

My father, Siegendorf!

WERNER (*starting*).

Hush! boy—
The walls may hear that name!

ULRIC.

What then?

WERNER.

Why, then—
But we will talk of that anon. Remember,
I must be known here but as Werner. Come!
Come to my arms again! Why, thou look'st all
I should have been, and was not. Josephine!
Sure 'tis no father's fondness dazzles me;
But had I seen that form amid ten thousand
Youth of the choicest, my heart would have chosen
This for my son!

ULRIC.

And yet you knew me not!

WERNER.

Alas! I have had that upon my soul
Which makes me look on all men with an eye
That only knows the evil at first glance.

ULRIC.

My memory served me far more fondly: I
Have not forgotten aught; and ofttimes in
The proud and princely halls of—(I 'll not name them,

As you say that 'tis perilous,) but i' the pomp
Of your sire's feudal mansion, I look'd back
To the Bohemian mountains many a sunset,
And wept to see another day go down
O'er thee and me, with those huge hills between us.
They shall not part us more.

WERNER.

I know not that.
Are you aware my father is no more?

ULRIC.

Oh heavens! I left him in a green old age,
And looking like the oak, worn, but still steady
Amidst the elements, whilst younger trees
Fell fast around him. 'Twas scarce three months since.

WERNER.

Why did you leave him?

JOSEPHINE (*embracing* ULRIC).

Can you ask that question?
Is he not *here*?

WERNER.

True; he hath sought his parents,
And found them; but, oh! *how*, and in what state!

ULRIC.

All shall be better'd. What we have to do
Is to proceed, and to assert our rights,
Or rather yours; for I waive all, unless
Your father has disposed in such a sort
Of his broad lands as to make mine the foremost,
So that I must prefer my claim for form:
But I trust better, and that all is yours.

WERNER.

Have you not heard of Stralenheim?

ULRIC.

I saved

His life but yesterday: he's here.

WERNER.

You saved

The serpent who will sting us all!

ULRIC.

You speak

Riddles: what is this *Stralenheim* to us?

WERNER.

Every thing. One who claims our fathers' lands:
Our distant kinsman, and our nearest foe.

ULRIC.

I never heard his name till now. The count,
Indeed, spoke sometimes of a kinsman, who,
If his own line should fail, might be remotely
Involved in the succession; but his titles
Were never named before me—and what then?
His right must yield to ours.

WERNER.

Ay, if at Prague:

But here he is all powerful; and has spread
Snares for thy father, which, if hitherto
He hath escaped them, is by fortune, not
By favour.

ULRIC.

Doth he personally know you?

WERNER.

No; but he guesses shrewdly at my person,

As he betray'd last night; and I, perhaps,
But owe my temporary liberty
To his uncertainty.

ULRIC.

I think you wrong him,
(Excuse me for the phrase); but Stralenheim
Is not what you prejudge him, or, if so,
He owes me something both for past and present:
I saved his life, he therefore trusts in me;
He hath been plunder'd too, since he came hither;
Is sick; a stranger; and as such not now
Able to trace the villain who hath robb'd him:
I have pledged myself to do so; and the business
Which brought me here was chiefly that: but I
Have found, in searching for another's dross,
My own whole treasure—you, my parents!

WERNER (*agitatedly*).

Who
Taught you to mouth that name of "villain?"

ULRIC.

What
More noble name belongs to common thieves?

WERNER.

Who taught you thus to brand an unknown being
With an infernal stigma?

ULRIC.

My own feelings
Taught me to name a ruffian from his deeds.

WERNER.

Who taught you, long-sought, and ill-found boy! that
It would be safe for my own son to insult me?

ULRIC.

I named a villain. What is there in common
With such a being and my father?

WERNER.

Every thing!
That ruffian is thy father!

JOSEPHINE.

Oh, my son!
Believe him not—and yet!——(*her voice falters*).

ULRIC (*starts, looks earnestly at* WERNER, *and then says slowly*)

And you avow it?

WERNER.

Ulric, before you dare despise your father,
Learn to divine and judge his actions. *Young*,
Rash, new to life, and rear'd in luxury's lap,
Is it for you to measure passion's force,
Or misery's temptation? Wait—(not long,
It cometh like the Night, and quickly)—Wait!—
Wait till, like me, your hopes are blighted—till
Sorrow and shame are handmaids of your cabin;
Famine and poverty your guests at table;
Despair your bed-fellow—then rise, but not
From sleep, and judge! Should that day e'er arrive—
Should you see then the serpent, who hath coil'd
Himself around all that is dear and noble
Of you and yours, lie slumbering in your path,
With but *his* folds between your steps and happiness,
When *he*, who lives but to tear from you name,
Lands, life itself, lies at your mercy, with

Chance your conductor; midnight for your mantle;
The bare knife in your hand, and earth asleep,
Even to your deadliest foe; and he as 't were
Inviting death, by looking like it, while
His death alone can save you:—Thank your God!
If then, like me, content with petty plunder,
You turn aside——I did so.

ULRIC.

But——

WERNER (*abruptly*).

Hear me!
I will not brook a human voice—scarce dare
Listen to my own (if that be human still)—
Hear me! you do not know this man—I do.
He 's mean, deceitful, avaricious. You
Deem yourself safe, as young and brave; but learn
None are secure from desperation, few
From subtilty. My worst foe, Stralenheim,
Housed in a prince's palace, couch'd within
A prince's chamber, lay below my knife!
An instant—a mere motion—the least impulse—
Had swept him and all fears of mine from earth.
He was within my power—my knife was raised—
Withdrawn—and I 'm in his:—are you not so?
Who tells you that he knows you *not?* Who says
He hath not lured you here to end you? or
To plunge you, with your parents, in a dungeon?
[*He pauses.*

ULRIC.

Proceed—proceed!

WERNER.

Me he hath ever known,
And hunted through each change of time—name—fortune—
And why not *you?* Are you more versed in men?
He wound snares round me; flung along my path
Reptiles, whom, in my youth, I would have spurn'd
Even from my presence; but, in spurning now,
Fill only with fresh venom. Will you be
More patient? Ulric!—Ulric!—there are crimes
Made venial by the occasion, and temptations
Which nature cannot master or forbear.

ULRIC (*looks first at him, and then at* JOSEPHINE).
My mother!

WERNER.

Ay! I thought so: you have now
Only one parent. I have lost alike
Father and son, and stand alone.

ULRIC.

But stay!

[WERNER *rushes out of the chamber.*

JOSEPHINE (*to* ULRIC).

Follow him not, until this storm of passion
Abates. Think'st thou that were it well for him
I had not follow'd?

ULRIC.

I obey you, mother,
Although reluctantly. My first act shall not
Be one of disobedience.

JOSEPHINE.

Oh! he is good!

Condemn him not from his own mouth, but trust
To me, who have borne so much with him, and for him,
That this is but the surface of his soul,
And that the depth is rich in better things.

ULRIC.

These then are but my father's principles?
My mother thinks not with him?

JOSEPHINE.

Nor doth he
Think as he speaks. Alas! long years of grief
Have made him sometimes thus.

ULRIC.

Explain to me
More clearly, then, these claims of Stralenheim,
That, when I see the subject in its bearings,
I may prepare to face him, or at least
To extricate you from your present perils.
I pledge myself to accomplish this—but would
I had arrived a few hours sooner!

JOSEPHINE.

Ay!
Hadst thou but done so!

Enter GABOR *and* IDENSTEIN, *with Attendants.*

GABOR (*to* ULRIC).

I have sought you, comrade.
So this is my reward!

ULRIC.

What do you mean?

GABOR.

'Sdeath! have I lived to these years, and for this!
(*To* IDENSTEIN.) But for your age and folly, I would——

IDENSTEIN.

Help!
Hands off! Touch an intendant!

GABOR.

Do not think
I'll honour you so much as save your throat
From the Ravenstone*, by choking you myself.

IDENSTEIN.

I thank you for the respite; but there are
Those who have greater need of it than me.

ULRIC.

Unriddle this vile wrangling, or——

GABOR.

At once, then,
The baron has been robb'd, and upon me
This worthy personage has deign'd to fix
His kind suspicions—me! whom he ne'er saw
Till yester' evening.

IDENSTEIN.

Wouldst have me suspect
My own acquaintances? You have to learn
That I keep better company.

GABOR.

You shall
Keep the best shortly, and the last for all men,

* The Ravenstone, "Ravenstein," is the *stone gibbet* of Germany, and so called from the ravens perching on it.

The worms! you hound of malice!

[GABOR *seizes on him.*

ULRIC (*interfering*).

Nay, no violence:
He's old, unarm'd—be temperate, Gabor!

GABOR (*letting go* IDENSTEIN).

True:
I am a fool to lose myself because
Fools deem me knave: it is their homage.

ULRIC (*to* IDENSTEIN).

How
Fare you?

IDENSTEIN.

Help!

ULRIC.

I *have* help'd you.

IDENSTEIN.

Kill him! then
I 'll say so.

GABOR.

I am calm—live on!

IDENSTEIN.

That 's more
Than you shall do, if there be judge or judgment
In Germany. The baron shall decide!

GABOR.

Does *he* abet you in your accusation?

IDENSTEIN.

Does he not?

GABOR.

Then next time let him go sink

Ere I go hang for snatching him from drowning.
But here he comes!

Enter STRALENHEIM.

GABOR (*goes up to him*).

My noble lord, I 'm here!

STRALENHEIM.

Well, Sir!

GABOR.

Have you aught with me?

STRALENHEIM.

What should I
Have with you?

GABOR.

You know best, if yesterday's
Flood has not wash'd away your memory;
But that 's a trifle. I stand here accused,
In phrases not equivocal, by yon
Intendant, of the pillage of your person,
Or chamber—is the charge your own, or his?

STRALENHEIM.

I accuse no man.

GABOR.

Then you acquit me, baron?

STRALENHEIM.

I know not whom to accuse, or to acquit,
Or scarcely to suspect.

GABOR.

But you at least
Should know whom *not* to suspect. I am insulted—
Oppress'd here by these menials, and I look

To you for remedy—teach them their duty!
To look for thieves at home were part of it,
If duly taught; but, in one word, if I
Have an accuser, let it be a man
Worthy to be so of a man like me.
I am your equal.

STRALENHEIM.

You!

GABOR.

Ay, Sir; and, for
Aught that you know, superior; but proceed—
I do not ask for hints, and surmises,
And circumstance, and proofs; I know enough
Of what I have done for you, and what you owe me,
To have at least waited your payment rather
Than paid myself, had I been eager of
Your gold. I also know that were I even
The villain I am deem'd, the service render'd
So recently would not permit you to
Pursue me to the death, except through shame,
Such as would leave your scutcheon but a blank.
But this is nothing; I demand of you
Justice upon your unjust servants, and
From your own lips a disavowal of
All sanction of their insolence: thus much
You owe to the unknown, who asks no more,
And never thought to have ask'd so much.

STRALENHEIM.

This tone
May be of innocence.

GABOR.

'Sdeath! who dare doubt it,
Except such villains as ne'er had it?

STRALENHEIM.

You
Are hot, Sir.

GABOR.

Must I turn an icicle
Before the breath of menials, and their master?

STRALENHEIM.

Ulric! you know this man; I found him in
Your company.

GABOR.

We found *you* in the Oder
Would we had left you there!

STRALENHEIM.

I give you thanks, Sir.

GABOR.

I've earn'd them; but might have earn'd more from others,
Perchance, if I had left you to your fate.

STRALENHEIM.

Ulric! you know this man?

GABOR.

No more than you do,
If he avouches not my honour.

ULRIC.

I
Can vouch your courage, and, as far as my
Own brief connexion led me, honour.

STRALENHEIM.

Then

I'm satisfied.

GABOR (*ironically*).

Right easily, methinks.

What is the spell in his asseveration
More than in mine?

STRALENHEIM.

I merely said, that *I*
Was satisfied—not that you were absolved.

GABOR.

Again! Am I accused or no?

STRALENHEIM.

Go to!

You wax too is olent: if circumstance
And general suspicion be against you,
Is the fault mine? Is't not enough that I
Decline all question of your guilt or innocence?

GABOR.

My lord, my lord, this is mere cozenage,
A vile equivocation: you well know
Your doubts are certainties to all around you—
Your looks a voice—your frowns a sentence; you
Are practising your power on me—because
You have it; but beware, you know not whom
You strive to tread on.

STRALENHEIM.

Threat'st thou?

GABOR.

Not so much

As you accuse. You hint the basest injury,
And I retort it with an open warning.

STRALENHEIM.

As you have said, 'tis true I owe you something,
For which you seem disposed to pay yourself.

GABOR.

Not with your gold.

STRALENHEIM.

With bootless insolence.

[*To his attendants and* IDENSTEIN.

You need not further to molest this man,
But let him go his way. Ulric, good morrow!

[*Exit* STRALENHEIM, IDENSTEIN, *and attendants*

GABOR (*following*).

I'll after him, and——

ULRIC (*stopping him*).

Not a step.

GABOR.

Who shall

Oppose me?

ULRIC.

Your own reason, with a moment's

Thought.

GABOR.

Must I bear this?

ULRIC.

Pshaw! we all must bear
The arrogance of something higher than
Ourselves—the highest cannot temper Satan,
Nor the lowest his vicegerents upon earth.

I've seen you brave the elements, and bear
Things which had made this silk-worm cast his skin—
And shrink you from a few sharp sneers and words?

GABOR.

Must I bear to be deem'd a thief? If 'twere
A bandit of the woods, I could have borne it—
There's something daring in it—but to steal
The monies of a slumbering man!—

ULRIC.

It seems, then,
You are *not* guilty?

GABOR.

Do I hear aright?
You too!

ULRIC.

I merely ask'd a simple question.

GABOR.

If the judge ask'd me—I would answer "No"—
To you I answer *thus*. (*He draws.*)

ULRIC (*drawing*).

With all my heart!

JOSEPHINE.

Without there! Ho! help! help!—Oh, God! here 's murder! [*Exit* JOSEPHINE, *shrieking.*

GABOR *and* ULRIC *fight.* GABOR *is disarmed just as* STRALENHEIM, JOSEPHINE, IDENSTEIN, *&c. re-enter.*

JOSEPHINE.

Oh! glorious Heaven! He's safe!

STRALENHEIM (*to* JOSEPHINE).

Who's safe?

JOSEPHINE.

My———

ULRIC (*interrupting her with a stern look, and turning afterwards to* STRALENHEIM).

Both!

Here's no great harm done.

STRALENHEIM.

What hath caused all this?

ULRIC.

You, Baron, I believe; but as the effect
Is harmless, let it not disturb you.—Gabor!
There is your sword; and when you bare it next,
Let it not be against your *friends*.

[ULRIC *pronounces the last words slowly and emphatically in a low voice to* GABOR.

GABOR.

I thank you
Less for my life than for your counsel.

STRALENHEIM.

These
Brawls must end here.

GABOR (*taking his sword*).

They *shall*. You have wrong'd me, Ulric,
More with your unkind thoughts than sword; I would
The last were in my bosom rather than
The first in yours. I could have borne yon noble's
Absurd insinuations—Ignorance
And dull suspicion are a part of his

Intail will last him longer than his lands.—
But I may fit *him* yet:—you have vanquish'd me.
I was the fool of passion to conceive
That I could cope with you whom I had seen
Already proved by greater perils than
Rest in this arm. We may meet by and by,
However—but in friendship. [*Exit* GABOR.

STRALENHEIM.

I will brook
No more! This outrage following up his insults,
Perhaps his guilt, has cancell'd all the little
I owed him heretofore for the so vaunted
Aid which he added to your abler succour.
Ulric, you are not hurt?—

ULRIC.

Not even by a scratch.

STRALENHEIM (*to* IDENSTEIN).

Intendant! take your measures to secure
Yon fellow: I revoke my former lenity.
He shall be sent to Frankfort with an escort
The instant that the waters have abated.

IDENSTEIN.

Secure him! he hath got his sword again—
And seems to know the use on't; 'tis his trade,
Belike:—I 'm a civilian.

STRALENHEIM.

Fool! are not
Yon score of vassals dogging at your heels
Enough to seize a dozen such? Hence! after him!

ULRIC.

Baron, I do beseech you!

STRALENHEIM.

I must be
Obey'd. No words!

IDENSTEIN.

Well, if it must be so—
March, vassals! I'm your leader—and will bring
The rear up: a wise general never should
Expose his precious life—on which all rests.
I like that article of war.

[*Exit* IDENSTEIN *and attendants.*

STRALENHEIM.

Come hither,
Ulric:—what does that woman here? Oh! now
I recognise her, 'tis the stranger's wife
Whom they *name* "Werner."

ULRIC.

'Tis his name.

STRALENHEIM.

Indeed!
Is not your husband visible, fair dame?—

JOSEPHINE.

Who seeks him?

STRALENHEIM.

No one—for the present: but
I fain would parley, Ulric, with yourself
Alone.

ULRIC.

I will retire with you.

JOSEPHINE.

Not so.
You are the latest stranger, and command

All places here.

(*Aside to* ULRIC *as she goes out*). Oh! Ulric, have a care—
Remember what depends on a rash word!

ULRIC (*to* JOSEPHINE).

Fear not!—

[*Exit* JOSEPHINE.

STRALENHEIM.

Ulric, I think that I may trust you?
You saved my life—and acts like these beget
Unbounded confidence.

ULRIC.

Say on.

STRALENHEIM.

Mysterious
And long engender'd circumstances (not
To be now fully enter'd on) have made
This man obnoxious—perhaps fatal to me.

ULRIC.

Who? Gabor, the Hungarian?

STRALENHEIM.

No—this "Werner"—
With the false name and habit.

ULRIC.

How can this be?
He is the poorest of the poor—and yellow
Sickness sits cavern'd in his hollow eye:
The man is helpless.

STRALENHEIM.

He is—'tis no matter—
But if he be the man I deem (and that

He is so, all around us here—and much
That is not here—confirm my apprehension),
He must be made secure, ere twelve hours further.

ULRIC.

And what have I to do with this?

STRALENHEIM.

I have sent
To Frankfort, to the governor, my friend—
(I have the authority to do so by
An order of the house of Brandenburgh)
For a fit escort—but this cursed flood
Bars all access, and may do for some hours.

ULRIC.

It is abating.

STRALENHEIM.

That is well.

ULRIC.

But how
Am I concern'd?

STRALENHEIM.

As one who did so much
For me, you cannot be indifferent to
That which is of more import to me than
The life you rescued.—Keep your eye on *him!*
The man avoids me, knows that I now know him.—
Watch him!—as you would watch the wild boar when
He makes against you in the hunter's gap—
Like him, he must be spear'd.

ULRIC.

Why so?

STRALENHEIM.

He stands
Between me and a brave inheritance!
Oh! could you see it! But you shall.

ULRIC.

I hope so.

STRALENHEIM.

It is the richest of the rich Bohemia,
Unscathed by scorching war. It lies so near
The strongest city, Prague, that fire and sword
Have skimm'd it lightly: so that now, besides
Its own exuberance, it bears double value
Confronted with whole realms afar and near
Made deserts.

ULRIC.

You describe it faithfully.

STRALENHEIM.

Ay—could you see it, you would say so—but,
As I have said, you shall.

ULRIC.

I accept the omen.

STRALENHEIM.

Then claim a recompense from it and me,
Such as *both* may make worthy your acceptance
And services to me and mine for ever.

ULRIC.

And this sole, sick, and miserable wretch—
This way-worn stranger—stands between you and
This Paradise?—(As Adam did between
The devil and his.)—[*Aside.*]

STRALENHEIM.

He doth.

ULRIC.

Hath he no right?

STRALENHEIM.

Right! none. A disinherited prodigal,
Who for these twenty years disgraced his lineage
In all his acts—but chiefly by his marriage,
And living amidst commerce-fetching burghers,
And dabbling merchants, in a mart of Jews.

ULRIC.

He has a wife, then?

STRALENHEIM.

You'd be sorry to
Call such your mother. You have seen the woman
He *calls* his wife.

ULRIC.

Is she not so?

STRALENHEIM.

No more
Than he's your father:—an Italian girl,
The daughter of a banish'd man, who lives
On love and poverty with this same Werner.

ULRIC.

They are childless, then?

STRALENHEIM.

There is or was a bastard,
Whom the old man—the grandsire (as old Age
Is ever doting) took to warm his bosom,
As it went chilly downward to the grave:

But the Imp stands not in my path—he has fled,
No one knows whither; and if he had not,
His claims alone were too contemptible
To stand.——Why do you smile?

ULRIC.

At your vain fears:
A poor man almost in his grasp—a child
Of doubtful birth—can startle a grandee!

STRALENHEIM.

All's to be fear'd, where all is to be gain'd.

ULRIC.

True; and aught done to save or to obtain it.

STRALENHEIM.

You have harp'd the very string next to my heart.
I may depend upon you?

ULRIC.

'Twere too late
To doubt it.

STRALENHEIM.

Let no foolish pity shake
Your bosom (for the appearance of the man
Is pitiful)—he is a wretch, as likely
To have robb'd me as the fellow more suspected,
Except that circumstance is less against him;
He being lodged far off, and in a chamber
Without approach to mine; and, to say truth,
I think too well of blood allied to mine,
To deem he would descend to such an act;
Besides, he was a soldier, and a brave one
Once—though too rash.

ULRIC.

And they, my lord, we know
By our experience, never plunder till
They knock the brains out first—which makes them heirs,
Not thieves. The dead, who feel nought, can lose nothing,
Nor e'er be robb'd: their spoils are a bequest—
No more.

STRALENHEIM.

Go to! you are a wag. But say
I may be sure you 'll keep an eye on this man,
And let me know his slightest movement towards
Concealment or escape?

ULRIC.

You may be sure
You yourself could not watch him more than I
Will be his sentinel.

STRALENHEIM.

By this, you make me
Yours, and for ever.

ULRIC.

Such is my intention.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT III.—SCENE I.

A Hall in the same Palace, from whence the secret Passage leads.

Enter WERNER *and* GABOR.

GABOR.

Sir, I have told my tale; if it so please you
To give me refuge for a few hours, well—
If not—I 'll try my fortune elsewhere.

WERNER.

How
Can I, so wretched, give to Misery
A shelter?—wanting such myself as much
As e'er the hunted deer a covert——

GABOR.

Or
The wounded lion his cool cave. Methinks
You rather look like one would turn at bay,
And rip the hunter's entrails.

WERNER.

Ah?

GABOR.

I care not
If it be so, being much disposed to do
The same myself; but will you shelter me?
I am oppress'd like you—and poor like you—
Disgraced——

WERNER (*abruptly*).

Who told you that I was disgraced?

GABOR.

No one; nor did I say *you* were so: with
Your poverty my likeness ended; but
I said *I* was so—and would add, with truth,
As undeservedly as *you*.

WERNER.

Again!
As *I*?

GABOR.

Or any other honest man.
What the devil would you have? You don't believe me
Guilty of this base theft?

WERNER.

No, no—I cannot.

GABOR.

Why, that's my heart of honour! yon young gallant—
Your miserly intendant and dense noble—
All—all suspected me; and why? because
I am the worst-clothed, and least named amongst them,
Although, were Momus' lattice in our breasts,
My soul might brook to open it more widely
Than theirs; but thus it is—you poor and helpless—
Both still more than myself.

WERNER.

How know you that?

GABOR.

You're right; I ask for shelter at the hand
Which I call helpless; if you now deny it,
I were well paid. But you, who seem to have proved

The wholesome bitterness of life, know well,
By sympathy, that all the outspread gold
Of the New World, the Spaniard boasts about,
Could never tempt the man who knows its worth,
Weigh'd at its proper value in the balance,
Save in such guise (and there I grant its power,
Because I feel it) as may leave no night-mare
Upon his heart o'nights.

WERNER.

What do you mean?

GABOR.

Just what I say; I thought my speech was plain:
You are no thief—nor I—and, as true men,
Should aid each other.

WERNER.

It is a damned world, sir.

GABOR.

So is the nearest of the two next, as
The priests say (and no doubt they should know best),
Therefore I 'll stick by this—as being loth
To suffer martyrdom, at least with such
An epitaph as larceny upon my tomb.
It is but a night's lodging which I crave;
To-morrow I will try the waters, as
The Dove did, trusting that they have abated.

WERNER.

Abated? Is there hope of that?

GABOR.

There was
At noontide.

WERNER.

Then we may be safe.

GABOR.

Are *you*
In peril?

WERNER.

Poverty is ever so.

GABOR.

That I know by long practice. Will you not
Promise to make mine less?

WERNER.

Your poverty?

GABOR.

No—you don't look a leech for that disorder;
I meant my peril only; you 've a roof,
And I have none; I merely seek a covert

WERNER.

Rightly; for how should such a wretch as I
Have gold?

GABOR.

Scarce honestly, to say the truth on 't,
Although I almost wish you had the baron's.

WERNER.

Dare you insinuate?

GABOR.

What?

WERNER.

Are you aware
To whom you speak?

GABOR.

No; and I am not used

Greatly to care. (*A noise heard without*). But hark! they come!

WERNER.

Who come?

GABOR.

The intendant and his man-hounds after me:
I'd face them—but it were in vain to expect
Justice at hands like theirs. Where shall I go?
But show me any place. I do assure you,
If there be faith in man, I am most guiltless:
Think if it were your own case!

WERNER (*aside*).

Oh, just God!
Thy hell is not hereafter! Am I dust still?

GABOR.

I see you're moved; and it shows well in you:
I may live to requite it.

WERNER.

Are you not
A spy of Stralenheim's?

GABOR.

Not I! and if
I were, what is there to espy in you?
Although I recollect his frequent question
About you and your spouse, might lead to some
Suspicion; but you best know—what—and why:
I am his deadliest foe.

WERNER.

You?

GABOR.

After such

A treatment for the service which in part
I render'd him—I am his enemy;
If you are not his friend, you will assist me.

WERNER.

I will.

GABOR.

But how?

WERNER (*showing the pannel*).

There is a secret spring;
Remember, I discover'd it by chance,
And used it but for safety.

GABOR.

Open it,
And I will use it for the same.

WERNER.

I found it,
As I have said: it leads through winding walls,
(So thick as to bear paths within their ribs,
Yet lose no jot of strength or stateliness),
And hollow cells, and obscure niches, to
I know not whither; you must not advance:
Give me your word.

GABOR.

It is unnecessary:
How should I make my way in darkness, through
A Gothic labyrinth of unknown windings?

WERNER.

Yes, but who knows to what place it may lead?
I know not—(mark you!)—but who knows it might not
Lead even into the chambers of your foe?

So strangely were contrived these galleries
By our Teutonic fathers in old days,
When man built less against the elements
Than his next neighbour. You must not advance
Beyond the two first windings; if you do
(Albeit I never pass'd them), I 'll not answer
For what you may be led to.

GABOR.

But I will.

A thousand thanks!

WERNER.

You 'll find the spring more obvious
On the other side; and, when you would return,
It yields to the least touch.

GABOR.

I'll in—farewell!

[GABOR *goes in by the secret pannel.*

WERNER (*solus*).

What have I done? Alas! what *had* I done
Before to make this fearful? Let it be
Still some atonement that I save the man,
Whose sacrifice had saved perhaps my own—
They come! to seek elsewhere what is before them!

Enter IDENSTEIN, *and Others.*

IDENSTEIN.

Is he not here? He must have vanish'd then
Through the dim Gothic glass by pious aid
Of pictured saints, upon the red and yellow
Casements, through which the sunset streams like sunrise
On long pearl-colour'd beards and crimson crosses,

And gilded crosiers, and cross'd arms, and cowls,
And helms, and twisted armour, and long swords,
All the fantastic furniture of windows,
Dim with brave knights and holy hermits, whose
Likeness and fame alike rest on some panes
Of crystal, which each rattling wind proclaims
As frail as any other life or glory.
He 's gone, however.

WERNER.

Whom do you seek?

IDENSTEIN.

A villain!

WERNER.

Why need you come so far, then?

IDENSTEIN.

In the search
Of him who robb'd the baron.

WERNER.

Are you sure
You have divined the man?

IDENSTEIN.

As sure as you
Stand there; but where 's he gone?

WERNER.

Who?

IDENSTEIN.

He we sought.

WERNER.

You see he is not here.

IDENSTEIN.

And yet we traced him

Up to this hall: are you accomplices,
Or deal you in the black art?

WERNER.

I deal plainly,
To many men the blackest.

IDENSTEIN.

It may be
I have a question or two for yourself
Hereafter; but we must continue now
Our search for t' other.

WERNER.

You had best begin
Your inquisition now; I may not be
So patient always.

IDENSTEIN.

I should like to know,
In good sooth, if you really are the man
That Stralenheim 's in quest of?

WERNER.

Insolent!
Said you not that he was not here?

IDENSTEIN.

Yes, *one;*
But there 's another whom he tracks more keenly,
And soon, it may be, with authority
Both paramount to his and mine. But, come!
Bustle, my boys! we are at fault.

[*Exit* IDENSTEIN, *and attendant.*

WERNER.

In what

A maze hath my dim destiny involved me!
And one base sin hath done me less ill than
The leaving undone one far greater. Down,
Thou busy devil! rising in my heart!
Thou art too late! I'll nought to do with blood.

Enter ULRIC.

ULRIC.

I sought you, father.

WERNER.

Is't not dangerous?

ULRIC.

No; Stralenheim is ignorant of all
Or any of the ties between us: more—
He sends me here a spy upon your actions,
Deeming me wholly his.

WERNER.

I cannot think it:
'Tis but a snare he winds about us both,
To swoop the sire and son at once.

ULRIC.

I cannot
Pause in each petty fear, and stumble at
The doubts that rise like briars in our path,
But must break through them, as an unarm'd carle
Would, though with naked limbs, were the wolf rustling
In the same thicket where he hew'd for bread:
Nets are for thrushes, eagles are not caught so;
We'll overfly, or rend them.

WERNER.

Show me *how*?

ULRIC.

Can you not guess?

WERNER.

I cannot.

ULRIC.

That is strange.
Came the thought ne'er into your mind *last night*?

WERNER.

I understand you not.

ULRIC.

Then we shall never
More understand each other. But to change
The topic——

WERNER.

You mean, to *pursue* it, as
'Tis of our safety.

ULRIC.

Right; I stand corrected.
I see the subject now more clearly, and
Our general situation in its bearings.
The waters are abating; a few hours
Will bring his summon'd myrmidons from Frankfort,
When you will be a prisoner, perhaps worse,
And I an outcast, bastardized by practice
Of this same baron to make way for him.

WERNER.

And now your remedy! I thought to escape
By means of this accursed gold, but now
I dare not use it, show it, scarce look on it.
Methinks it wears upon its face my guilt

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For motto, not the mintage of the state;
And, for the sovereign's head, my own begirt
With hissing snakes, which curl around my temples,
And cry to all beholders—lo! a villain!

ULRIC.

You must not use it, at least, now; but take
This ring. [*He gives* WERNER *a jewel.*

WERNER.

A gem! It was my father's!

ULRIC.

And
As such is now your own. With this you must
Bribe the Intendant for his old calêche
And horses to pursue your route at sunrise,
Together with my mother.

WERNER.

And leave you,
So lately found, in peril too?

ULRIC.

Fear nothing!
The only fear were if we fled together,
For that would make our ties beyond all doubt.
The waters only lie in flood between
This burgh and Frankfort; so far 's in our favour.
The route on to Bohemia, though encumber'd,
Is not impassable; and when you gain
A few hours' start, the difficulties will be
The same to your pursuers. Once beyond
The frontier, and you 're safe.

WERNER.

My noble boy!

ULRIC.

Hush! hush! no transports: we'll indulge in them
In Castle Siegendorf! Display no gold:
Show Idenstein the gem (I know the man,
And have look'd through him): it will answer thus
A double purpose. Stralenheim lost *gold*—
No jewel: therefore, it could *not* be his;
And then the man, who was possest of this,
Can hardly be suspected of abstracting
The baron's coin, when he could thus convert
This ring to more than Stralenheim has lost
By his last night's slumber. Be not over timid
In your address, nor yet too arrogant,
And Idenstein will serve you.

WERNER.

I will follow
In all things your direction.

ULRIC.

I would have
Spared you the trouble; but had I appear'd
To take an interest in you, and still more
By dabbling with a jewel in your favour,
All had been known at once.

WERNER.

My guardian angel!
This overpays the past. But how wilt thou
Fare in our absence?

ULRIC.

Stralenheim knows nothing
Of me as aught of kindred with yourself.

I will but wait a day or two with him
To lull all doubts, and then rejoin my father.

WERNER.

To part no more!

ULRIC.

I know not that; but at
The least we 'll meet again once more.

WERNER.

My boy!
My friend—my only child, and sole preserver!
Oh, do not hate me!

ULRIC.

Hate my father!

WERNER.

Ay,
My father hated me. Why not, my son?

ULRIC.

Your father knew you not as I do.

WERNER.

Scorpions
Are in thy words! Thou know me? in this guise
Thou canst not know me, I am not myself,
Yet (hate me not) I will be soon.

ULRIC.

I 'll *wait!*
In the mean time be sure that all a son
Can do for parents shall be done for mine.

WERNER.

I see it, and I feel it, yet I feel
Further—that you despise me.

ULRIC.

Wherefore should I?

WERNER.

Must I repeat my humiliation?

ULRIC.

No!

I have fathom'd it and you. But let us talk
Of this no more. Or if it must be ever,
Not *now*; your error has redoubled all
The present difficulties of our house
At secret war with that of Stralenheim;
All we have now to think of, is to baffle
HIM. I have shown *one* way.

WERNER.

The only one,
And I embrace it, as I did my son,
Who show'd *himself* and father's *safety* in
One day.

ULRIC.

You *shall* be safe: let that suffice.
Would Stralenheim's appearance in Bohemia
Disturb your right, or mine, if once we were
Admitted to our lands?

WERNER.

Assuredly,
Situate as we are now, although the first
Possessor might, as usual, prove the strongest,
Especially the next in blood.

ULRIC.

Blood! 'tis
A word of many meanings; in the veins

And out of them, it is a different thing—
And so it should be, when the same in blood
(As it is call'd) are aliens to each other,
Like Theban brethren: when a part is bad,
A few spilt ounces purify the rest.

WERNER.

I do not apprehend you.

ULRIC.

That may be—
And should, perhaps,—and yet——but get ye ready;
You and my mother must away to-night.
Here comes the Intendant; sound him with the gem,
'Twill sink into his venal soul like lead
Into the deep, and bring up slime, and mud,
And ooze, too, from the bottom, as the lead doth
With its greased understratum; but no less
Will serve to warn our vessels through these shoals.
The freight is rich, so heave the line in time!
Farewell! I scarce have time, but yet your *hand*,
My father!——

WERNER.

Let me embrace thee!

ULRIC.

We may be
Observed: subdue your nature to the hour!
Keep off from me as from your foe!

WERNER.

Accursed
Be he, who is the stifling cause, which smothers
The best and sweetest feeling of our hearts,
At such an hour too!

ULRIC.

Yes, curse—it will ease you!
Here is the Intendant.

Enter IDENSTEIN.

Master Idenstein,
How fare you in your purpose? Have you caught
The rogue?

IDENSTEIN.

No, faith!

ULRIC.

Well, there are plenty more:
You may have better luck another chase.
Where is the baron?

IDENSTEIN.

Gone back to his chamber:
And now I think on't, asking after you
With nobly-born impatience.

ULRIC.

Your great men
Must be answer'd on the instant, as the bound
Of the stung steed replies unto the spur:
'Tis well they have horses, too; for if they had not,
I fear that men must draw their chariots, as
They say kings did Sesostris.

IDENSTEIN.

Who was he?

ULRIC.

An old Bohemian—an imperial gipsy.

IDENSTEIN.

A gipsy or Bohemian, 'tis the same,
For they pass by both names. And was he one?

ULRIC.

I've heard so; but I must take leave. Intendant,
Your servant!—Werner, (*to* WERNER *slightly*) if that be your name,
Yours. [*Exit* ULRIC.

IDENSTEIN.

A well-spoken, pretty-faced young man!
And prettily behaved! He knows his station,
You see, sir: how he gave to each his due
Precedence!

WERNER.

I perceived it, and applaud
His just discernment and your own.

IDENSTEIN.

That's well—
That's very well. You also know your place, too,
And yet I don't know that I know your place.

WERNER (*showing the ring*).

Would this assist your knowledge?

IDENSTEIN.

How!—What!—Eh!
A jewel!

WERNER.

'Tis your own on one condition.

IDENSTEIN.

Mine!—Name it!

WERNER.

That hereafter you permit me

At thrice its value to redeem it; 'tis
A family ring.

IDENSTEIN.

A family! *yours!* a gem!
I'm breathless!

WERNER.

You must also furnish me
An hour ere daybreak with all means to quit
This place.

IDENSTEIN.

But is it real? let me look on it:
Diamond, by all that's glorious!

WERNER.

Come, I'll trust you;
You have guess'd, no doubt, that I was born above
My present seeming.

IDENSTEIN.

I can't say I did,
Though this looks like it; this is the true breeding
Of gentle blood!

WERNER.

I have important reasons
For wishing to continue privily
My journey hence.

IDENSTEIN.

So then *you are* the man
Whom Stralenheim's in quest of?

WERNER.

I am not;
But being taken for him might conduct

So much embarrassment to me just now,
And to the baron's self hereafter—'tis
To spare both, that I would avoid all bustle.

IDENSTEIN.

Be you the man or no, 'tis not my business;
Besides, I never should obtain the half
From this proud, niggardly noble, who would raise
The country for some missing bits of coin,
And never offer a precise reward—
But *this!* another look!

WERNER.

Gaze on it freely;
At day-dawn it is yours.

IDENSTEIN.

Oh, thou sweet sparkler!
Thou more than stone of the philosopher!
Thou touchstone of Philosophy herself!
Thou bright eye of the Mine! thou load-star of
The soul! the true magnetic Pole to which
All hearts point duly north, like trembling needles!
Thou flaming Spirit of the Earth! which sitting
High on the monarch's diadem, attractest
More worship than the Majesty who sweats
Beneath the crown which makes his head ache, like
Millions of hearts which bleed to lend it lustre!
Shalt thou be mine? I am, methinks, already
A little king, a lucky alchymist!—
A wise magician, who has bound the devil
Without the forfeit of his soul. But come,
Werner, or what else?

WERNER.

Call me Werner still,
You may yet know me by a loftier title.

IDENSTEIN.

I do believe in thee! thou art the spirit
Of whom I long have dream'd, in a low garb.—
But come, I'll serve thee; thou shalt be as free
As air, despite the waters; let us hence,
I'll show thee I am honest—(oh, thou jewel!)
Thou shalt be furnish'd, Werner, with such means
Of flight, that if thou wert a snail, not birds
Should overtake thee.—Let me gaze again!
I have a foster-brother in the mart
Of Hamburgh, skill'd in precious stones—how many
Carats may it weigh?—Come, Werner, I will wing thee.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

STRALENHEIM'S *Chamber.*

STRALENHEIM *and* FRITZ.

FRITZ.

All 's ready, my good lord!

STRALENHEIM.

I am not sleepy,
And yet I must to bed; I fain would say
To rest, but something heavy on my spirit,
Too dull for wakefulness, too quick for slumber,
Sits on me as a cloud along the sky,

Which will not let the sunbeams through, nor yet
Descend in rain and end, but spreads itself
'Twixt earth and heaven, like envy between man
And man, an everlasting mist;—I will
Unto my pillow.

FRITZ.

May you rest there well!

STRALENHEIM.

I feel, and fear, I shall.

FRITZ.

And wherefore fear?

STRALENHEIM.

I know not why, and therefore do fear more,
Because an undescribable——but 'tis
All folly. Were the locks (as I desired)
Changed, to-day, of this chamber? for last night's
Adventure makes it needful.

FRITZ.

Certainly,
According to your order, and beneath
The inspection of myself and the young Saxon
Who saved your life. I think they call him "Ulric."

STRALENHEIM.

You *think!* you supercilious slave! what right
Have you to *tax your* memory, which should be
Quick, proud, and happy to retain the *name*
Of him who saved your master, as a litany
Whose daily repetition marks your duty—
Get hence! "*you think*," indeed! you who stood still
Howling and dripping on the bank, whilst I

Lay dying, and the stranger dash'd aside
The roaring torrent, and restored me to
Thank him—and despise you. "*You think!*" and scarce
Can recollect his name! I will not waste
More words on you. Call me betimes.

FRITZ.

Good night!
I trust to-morrow will restore your lordship
To renovated strength and temper.

[*The scene closes.*

SCENE III.

The secret Passage.

GABOR, *solus.*

Four—
Five—six hours have I counted, like the guard
Of outposts on the never-merry clock:
That hollow tongue of time, which, even when
It sounds for joy, takes something from enjoyment
With every clang. 'Tis a perpetual knell,
Though for a marriage feast it rings: each stroke
Peals for a hope the less; the funeral note
Of Love deep-buried without resurrection
In the grave of Possession; while the knoll
Of long-lived parents finds a jovial echo
To triple Time in the sons' ear.
I'm cold—

I'm dark—I've blown my fingers—number'd o'er
And o'er my steps—and knock'd my head against
Some fifty buttresses—and roused the rats
And bats in general insurrection, till
Their cursed pattering feet and whirring wings
Leave me scarce hearing for another sound.
A light! It is at distance (if I can
Measure in darkness distance): but it blinks
As through a crevice or a key-hole, in
The inhibited direction; I must on,
Nevertheless, from curiosity.
A distant lamp-light is an incident
In such a den as this. Pray Heaven it lead me
To nothing that may tempt me! Else—Heaven aid me
To obtain or to escape it! Shining still!
Were it the Star of Lucifer himself,
Or he himself girt with its beams, I could
Contain no longer. Softly! mighty well!
That corner's turn'd—So—Ah! no;—right! it draws
Nearer. Here is a darksome angle—so,
That's weather'd.—Let me pause.—Suppose it leads
Into some greater danger than that which
I have escaped—no matter, 'tis a new one;
And novel perils, like fresh mistresses,
Wear more magnetic aspects:—I will on,
And be it where it may—I have my dagger,
Which may protect me at a pinch.—Burn still,
Thou little light! Thou art my *ignis fatuus!*
My stationary Will o' the wisp!—So! so!
He hears my invocation, and fails not.

[*The scene closes.*

SCENE IV.

A Garden.

Enter WERNER.

I could not sleep—and now the hour's at hand;
All's ready. Idenstein has kept his word;
And, station'd in the outskirts of the town,
Upon the forest's edge, the vehicle
Awaits us. Now the dwindling stars begin
To pale in Heaven; and for the last time I
Look on these horrible walls. Oh! never, never
Shall I forget them. Here I came most poor,
But not dishonour'd: and I leave them with
A stain,—if not upon my name, yet in
My heart! A never-dying canker-worm,
Which all the coming splendour of the lands,
And rights, and sovereignty of Siegendorf,
Can scarcely lull a moment: I must find
Some means of restitution, which would ease
My soul in part; but how without discovery?—
It must be done, however: and I'll pause
Upon the method the first hour of safety.
The madness of my Misery led to this
Base infamy; Repentance must retrieve it:
I will have nought of Stralenheim's upon
My spirit, though he would grasp all of mine;
Lands, freedom, life,—and yet he sleeps! as soundly,
Perhaps, as infancy, with gorgeous curtains

Spread for his canopy, o'er silken pillows,
Such as when——Hark! what noise is that? Again!
The branches shake; and some loose stones have fallen
From yonder terrace.

[ULRIC *leaps down from the terrace.*

Ulric! ever welcome!
Thrice welcome now! this filial——

ULRIC.

Stop! before
We approach, tell me——

WERNER.

Why look you so?

ULRIC.

Do I
Behold my father, or——

WERNER.

What?

ULRIC.

An assassin!

WERNER.

Insane or insolent!

ULRIC.

Reply, sir, as
You prize your life, or mine!

WERNER.

To what must I
Answer?

ULRIC.

Are you or are you not the assassin
Of Stralenheim?

WERNER.

I never was as yet
The murderer of any man. What mean you?

ULRIC.

Did you not *this* night (as the night before)
Retrace the secret passage? Did you not
Again revisit Stralenheim's chamber? and——

[ULRIC *pauses.*

WERNER.

Proceed.

ULRIC.

Died he not by your hand?

WERNER.

Great God!

ULRIC.

You are innocent, then! my father's innocent!
Embrace me! Yes,—your tone—your look—yes, yes,—
Yet *say* so!

WERNER.

If I e'er, in heart or mind,
Conceived deliberately such a thought,
But rather strove to trample back to hell
Such thoughts—if e'er they glared a moment through
The irritation of my oppressed spirit—
May Heaven be shut for ever from my hopes
As from mine eyes!

ULRIC.

But Stralenheim is dead.

WERNER.

Tis horrible! 'tis hideous, as 'tis hateful!—
But what have I to do with this?

ULRIC.

No bolt
Is forced; no violence can be detected,
Save on his body. Part of his own household
Have been alarm'd; but as the Intendant is
Absent, I took upon myself the care
Of mustering the police. His chamber has,
Past doubt, been enter'd secretly. Excuse me,
If nature——

WERNER.

Oh, my boy! what unknown woes
Of dark fatality, like clouds, are gathering
Above our house!

ULRIC.

My father! I acquit you!
But will the world do so? Will even the judge,
If——but you must away this instant.

WERNER.

No!
I'll face it. Who shall dare suspect me?

ULRIC.

Yet
You had *no* guests—*no* visitors—no life
Breathing around you, save my mother's?

WERNER.

Ah!
The Hungarian!

ULRIC.

He is gone! he disappear'd
Ere sunset.

WERNER.

No; I hid him in that very
Conceal'd and fatal gallery.

ULRIC.

There I'll find him.

[ULRIC *is going.*

WERNER.

It is too late: he had left the palace ere
I quitted it. I found the secret pannel
Open; and the doors which lead from that hall
Which masks it: I but thought he had snatch'd the silent
And favourable moment to escape
The myrmidons of Idenstein, who were
Dogging him yester-even.

ULRIC.

You re-closed
The pannel?

WERNER.

Yes; and not without reproach
(And inner trembling for the avoided peril)
At his dull heedlessness, in leaving thus
His shelterer's asylum to the risk
Of a discovery.

ULRIC.

You are sure you closed it?

WERNER.

Certain.

ULRIC.

That's well: but had been better, if
You ne'er had turn'd it to a den for—— [*He pauses.*

WERNER.

Thieves!
Thou wouldst say: I must bear it, and deserve it;
But not——

ULRIC.

No, father; do not speak of this;
This is no hour to think of petty crimes,
But to prevent the consequence of great ones.
Why would you shelter this man?

WERNER.

Could I shun it?
A man pursued by my chief foe; disgraced
For my own crime; a victim to *my* safety,
Imploring a few hours' concealment from
The very wretch who was the cause he needed
Such refuge. Had he been a wolf, I could not
Have, in such circumstances, thrust him forth.

ULRIC.

And like the wolf he hath repaid you. But
It is too late to ponder this: you must
Set out ere dawn. I will remain here to
Trace out the murderer, if 'tis possible.

WERNER.

But this my sudden flight will give the Moloch
Suspicion: two new victims, in the lieu
Of one, if I remain. The fled Hungarian,
Who seems the culprit, and——

ULRIC.

Who *seems*? *Who* else
Can be so?

WERNER.

Not *I*, though just now you doubted—
You, my *son!*—doubted——

ULRIC.

And do you doubt of him
The fugitive?

WERNER.

Boy! since I fell into
The abyss of crime (though not of *such* crime), I
Having seen the innocent oppress'd for me,
May doubt even of the guilty's guilt. Your heart
Is free, and quick with virtuous wrath to accuse
Appearances; and views a criminal
In Innocence's shadow, it may be,
Because 'tis dusky.

ULRIC.

And if I do so,
What will mankind, who know you not, or knew
But to oppress? You must not stand the hazard.
Away!—I'll make all easy. Idenstein
Will for his own sake and his jewel's hold
His peace—he also is a partner in
Your flight—moreover——

WERNER.

Fly! and leave my name
Link'd with the Hungarian's, or preferr'd as poorest,
To bear the brand of bloodshed?

ULRIC.

Pshaw! leave any thing
Except our father's sovereignty and castles,

For which you have so long panted and in vain!
What *name*? You leave *no name*, since that you bear
Is feign'd.

WERNER.

Most true; but still I would not have it
Engraved in crimson in men's memories,
Though in this most obscure abode of men—
Besides, the search——

ULRIC.

I will provide against
Aught that can touch you. No one knows you here
As heir of Siegendorf: if Idenstein
Suspects, 'tis *but suspicion*, and he is
A fool: his folly shall have such employment,
Too, that the unknown Werner shall give way
To nearer thoughts of self. The laws (if e'er
Laws reach'd this village) are all in abeyance
With the late general war of thirty years,
Or crush'd, or rising slowly from the dust,
To which the march of armies trampled them.
Stralenheim, although noble, is unheeded
Here, save as *such*—without lands, influence,
Save what hath perish'd with him; few prolong
A week beyond their funeral rites their sway
O'er men, unless by relatives, whose interest
Is roused: such is not here the case; he died
Alone, unknown,—a solitary grave,
Obscure as his deserts, without a scutcheon,
Is all he'll have, or wants. If *I* discover
The assassin, 'twill be well—if not, believe me

None else; though all the full fed train of menials
May howl above his ashes (as they did
Around him in his danger on the Oder),
Will no more stir a finger *now* than *then*.
Hence! hence! I must not hear your answer—look!
The stars are almost faded, and the gray
Begins to grizzle the black hair of night.
You shall not answer—Pardon me, that I
Am peremptory, 'tis your son that speaks,
Your long-lost, late-found son—Let 's call my mother!
Softly and swiftly step, and leave the rest
To me; I'll answer for the event as far
As regards *you*, and that is the chief point,
As my first duty, which shall be observed.
We'll meet in Castle Siegendorf—once more
Our banners shall be glorious! Think of that
Alone, and leave all other thoughts to me,
Whose youth may better battle with them—Hence!
And may your age be happy!—I will kiss
My mother once more, then Heaven's speed be with you!

WERNER.

This counsel 's safe—but is it honourable?

ULRIC.

To save a father is a child's chief honour.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.—SCENE I.

A Gothic Hall in the Castle of Siegendorf, near Prague.

Enter ERIC *and* HENRICK, *retainers of the Count.*

ERIC.

So, better times are come at last; to these
Old walls new masters and high wassail, both
A long desideratum.

HENRICK.

Yes, for *masters*,
It might be unto those who long for novelty,
Though made by a new grave: but as for wassail,
Methinks the old Count Siegendorf maintain'd
His feudal hospitality as high
As e'er another prince of the empire.

ERIC.

Why,
For the mere cup and trencher, we no doubt
Fared passing well; but as for merriment
And sport, without which salt and sauces season
The cheer but scantily, our sizings were
Even of the narrowest.

HENRICK.

The old count loved not
The roar of revel; are you sure that *this* does?

ERIC.

As yet he hath been courteous as he's bounteous,
And we all love him.

HENRICK.

His reign is as yet
Hardly a year o'erpast its honey-moon,
And the first year of sovereigns is bridal;
Anon, we shall perceive his real sway
And moods of mind.

ERIC.

Pray, heaven, he keep the present!
Then his brave son, Count Ulric—there's a knight!
Pity the wars are o'er!

HENRICK.

Why so?

ERIC.

Look on him!
And answer that yourself.

HENRICK.

He's very youthful,
And strong and beautiful as a young tiger.

ERIC.

That's not a faithful vassal's likeness.

HENRICK.

But
Perhaps a true one.

ERIC.

Pity, as I said,
The wars are over: in the hall, who like
Count Ulric for a well-supported pride,

Which awes but yet offends not? in the field,
Who like him with his spear in hand, when, gnashing
His tusks, and ripping up from right to left
The howling hounds, the boar makes for the thicket?
Who backs a horse, or bears a hawk, or wears
A sword like him? Whose plume nods knightlier?

HENRICK.

No one's, I grant you: do not fear, if War
Be long in coming, he is of that kind
Will make it for himself, if he hath not
Already done as much.

ERIC.

What do you mean?

HENRICK.

You can't deny his train of followers
(But few our fellow native vassals born
On the domain) are such a sort of knaves
As—— (*pauses*)

ERIC.

What?

HENRICK.

The wars (you love so much) leaves living;
Like other Parents, She spoils her worst children.

ERIC.

Nonsense! they are all brave iron-visaged fellows,
Such as old Tilly loved.

HENRICK.

And who loved Tilly?
Ask that at Magdebourgh—or for that matter
Wallenstein either—they are gone to——

ERIC.

Rest;
But what beyond 'tis not ours to pronounce.

HENRICK.

I wish they had left us something of their rest:
The country (nominally now at peace)
Is overrun with—God knows who—they fly
By night, and disappear with sunrise; but
Leave no less desolation, nay, even more
Than the most *open* warfare.

ERIC.

But Count Ulric—
What has all this to do with him?

HENRICK.

With *him!*
He——might prevent it. As you say he 's fond
Of war, why makes he it not on those marauders?

ERIC.

You 'd better ask himself.

HENRICK.

I would as soon
Ask of the lion why he laps not milk.

ERIC.

And here he comes!

HENRICK.

The devil! you 'll hold your tongue?

ERIC.

Why do you turn so pale?

HENRICK.

'Tis nothing—but
Be silent!

ERIC.

I will upon what you have said.

HENRICK.

I assure you I meant nothing, a mere sport
Of words, no more; besides, had it been otherwise,
He is to espouse the gentle Baroness
Ida of Stralenheim, the late Baron's heiress,
And she no doubt will soften whatsoever
Of fierceness the late long intestine wars
Have given all natures, and most unto those
Who were born in them, and bred up upon
The knees of Homicide; sprinkled, as it were,
With blood even at their baptism. Prithee, peace
On all that I have said!

Enter ULRIC *and* RODOLPH.

Good morrow, Count!

ULRIC.

Good morrow, worthy Henrick. Eric, is
All ready for the chase?

ERIC.

The dogs are order'd
Down to the forest, and the vassals out
To beat the bushes, and the day looks promising.
Shall I call forth your excellency's suite?
What courser will you please to mount?

ULRIC.

The dun,
Walstein.

ERIC.

I fear he scarcely has recover'd

The toils of Monday: 'twas a noble chase,
You spear'd *four* with your own hand.

ULRIC.

True, good Eric,
I had forgotten—let it be the gray then,
Old Ziska: he has not been out this fortnight.

ERIC.

He shall be strait caparison'd. How many
Of your immediate retainers shall
Escort you?

ULRIC.

I leave that to Weilburgh, our
Master of the horse. [*Exit* ERIC.
Rodolph!

RODOLPH.

My lord!

ULRIC.

The news
Is awkward from the—(RODOLPH *points to* HENRICK)
How now, Henrick, why
Loiter you here?

HENRICK.

For your commands, my lord.

ULRIC.

Go to my father, and present my duty,
And learn if he would aught with me before
I mount. [*Exit* HENRICK.
Rodolph, our friends have had a check
Upon the frontiers of Franconia, and
'Tis rumour'd that the column sent against them
Is to be strengthen'd. I must join them soon.

RODOLPH.

Best wait for further and more sure advices.

ULRIC.

I mean it—and indeed it could not well
Have fallen out at a time more opposite
To all my plans.

RODOLPH.

It will be difficult
To excuse your absence to the Count, your father.

ULRIC.

Yes, but the unsettled state of our domain
In high Silesia will permit and cover
My journey. In the mean time, when we are
Engaged in the chase, draw off the eighty men
Whom Wolffe leads—keep the forests on your route:
You know it well?

RODOLPH.

As well as on that night
When we——

ULRIC.

We will not speak of that until
We can repeat the same with like success;
And when you have join'd, give Rosenberg this letter.

[*Gives a letter.*

Add further, that I have sent this slight addition
To our force with you and Wolffe, as herald of
My coming, though I could but spare them ill
At this time, as my father loves to keep
Full numbers of retainers round the castle,
Until this marriage, and its feasts and fooleries,
Are rung out with its peal of nuptial nonsense.

RODOLPH.

I thought you loved the lady Ida?

ULRIC

Why,
I do so—but it follows not from that
I would bind in my youth and glorious years,
So brief and burning, with a lady's zone,
Although 'twere that of Venus;—but I love her,
As woman should be loved, fairly and solely.

RODOLPH.

And constantly?

ULRIC.

I think so; for I love
Nought else.—But I have not the time to pause
Upon these gewgaws of the heart. Great things
We have to do ere long. Speed! Speed! good Rodolph!

RODOLPH.

On my return, however, I shall find
The Baroness Ida lost in Countess Siegendorf?

ULRIC.

Perhaps: my father wishes it, and sooth
'Tis no bad policy; this union with
The last bud of the rival branch at once
Unites the future and destroys the past.

RODOLPH.

Adieu!

ULRIC

Yet hold—we had better keep together
Until the chase begins; then draw thou off,
And do as I have said.

RODOLPH.

I will. But to
Return—'twas a most kind act in the count,
Your father, to send up to Konigsberg
For this fair orphan of the baron, and
To hail her as his daughter.

ULRIC.

Wondrous kind!
Especially as little kindness till
Then grew between them.

RODOLPH.

The late baron died
Of a fever, did he not?

ULRIC.

How should I know?

RODOLPH.

I have heard it whisper'd there was something strange
About his death—and even the place of it
Is scarcely known.

ULRIC.

Some obscure village on
The Saxon or Silesian frontier.

RODOLPH.

He
Has left no testament—no farewell words?

ULRIC.

I am neither confessor nor notary,
So cannot say.

RODOLPH.

Ah! here's the lady Ida.

Enter IDA STRALENHEIM.

ULRIC.

You are early, my sweet cousin!

IDA.

Not *too* early,
Dear Ulric, if I do not interrupt you.
Why do you call me "*Cousin?*"

ULRIC (*smiling*).

Are we not so?

IDA.

Yes, but I do not like the name; methinks
It sounds so cold, as if you thought upon
Our pedigree, and only weigh'd our blood.

ULRIC (*starting*).

Blood!

IDA.

Why does yours start from your cheeks?

ULRIC.

Ay! doth it?

IDA.

It doth—but no! it rushes like a torrent
Even to your brow again.

ULRIC (*recovering himself*).

And if it fled,
It only was because your presence sent it
Back to my heart, which beats for you, sweet cousin!

IDA.

"Cousin" again.

ULRIC.

Nay, then I 'll call you sister.

IDA.

I like that name still worse—would we had ne'er
Been aught of kindred!

ULRIC (*gloomily*).

Would we never had!

IDA.

Oh heaven! and can *you wish that?*

ULRIC.

Dearest Ida!
Did I not echo your own wish?

IDA.

Yes, Ulric,
But then I wish'd it not with such a glance,
And scarce knew what I said; but let me be
Sister, or cousin, what you will, so that
I still to you am something.

ULRIC.

You shall be
All—all——

IDA.

And you to *me are* so already;
But I can wait.

ULRIC.

Dear Ida!

IDA.

Call me Ida,
Your Ida, for I would be yours, none else's—
Indeed I have none else left, since my poor father—
[*She pauses.*

ULRIC.

You have *mine*—you have *me.*

IDA.

Dear Ulric, how I wish
My father could but view our happiness,
Which wants but this!

ULRIC.

Indeed!

IDA.

You would have loved him,
He you; for the brave ever love each other:
His manner was a little cold, his spirit
Proud (as is birth's prerogative), but under
This grave exterior——would you had known each other!
Had such as you been near him on his journey,
He had not died without a friend to soothe
His last and lonely moments.

ULRIC.

Who says *that?*

IDA.

What?

ULRIC.

That he *died alone.*

IDA.

The general rumour,
And disappearance of his servants, who
Have ne'er return'd: that fever was most deadly
Which swept them all away.

ULRIC.

If they were near him,
He could not die neglected or alone.

IDA.

Alas! what is a menial to a death-bed,

When the dim eye rolls vainly round for what
It loves?—they say he died of a fever.

ULRIC.

Say!
It *was* so.

IDA.

I sometimes dream otherwise.

ULRIC.

All dreams are false.

IDA.

And yet I see him as
I see you.

ULRIC.

Where?

IDA.

In sleep—I see him lie
Pale, bleeding, and a man with a raised knife
Beside him.

ULRIC.

But you do not see his *face?*

IDA (*looking at him*).

No! Oh, my God! do *you?*

ULRIC.

Why do you ask?

IDA.

Because you look as if you saw a murderer!

ULRIC (*agitatedly*).

Ida, this is mere childishness; your weakness
Infects me, to my shame; but as all feelings
Of yours are common to me, it affects me.
Prithee, sweet child, change——

IDA.

Child, indeed! I have
Full fifteen summers! [*A bugle sounds.*

RODOLPH.

Hark, my lord, the bugle!

IDA (*peevishly to* RODOLPH).

Why need you tell him that? Can he not hear it
Without your echo?

RODOLPH.

Pardon me, fair baroness!

IDA.

I will not pardon you, unless you earn it
By aiding me in my dissuasion of
Count Ulric from the chase to-day.

RODOLPH.

You will not,
Lady, need aid of mine.

ULRIC.

I must not now
Forego it.

IDA.

But you shall!

ULRIC.

Shall!

IDA.

Yes, or be
No true knight.—Come, dear Ulric! yield to me
In this, for this one day; the day looks heavy,
And you are turn'd so pale and ill.

ULRIC.

You jest.

IDA.

Indeed I do not:—ask of Rodolph.

RODOLPH.

Truly,
My lord, within this quarter of an hour
You have changed more than I e'er saw you change
In years.

ULRIC.

'Tis nothing; but if 'twere, the air
Would soon restore me. I 'm the true cameleon,
And live but on the atmosphere; your feasts
In castle halls, and social banquets, nurse not
My spirit—I 'm a forester and breather
Of the steep mountain-tops, where I love all
The eagle loves.

IDA.

Except his prey, I hope.

ULRIC.

Sweet Ida, wish me a fair chase, and I
Will bring you six boars' heads for trophies home.

IDA.

And will you not stay, then? You shall not go!
Come! I will sing to you.

ULRIC.

Ida, you scarcely
Will make a soldier's wife.

IDA.

I do not wish
To be so; for I trust these wars are over,
And you will live in peace on your domains.

Enter WERNER *as* COUNT SIEGENDORF.

ULRIC.

My father, I salute you, and it grieves me
With such brief greeting.—You have heard our bugle;
The vassals wait.

SIEGENDORF.

So let them—You forget
To-morrow is the appointed festival
In Prague for peace restored. You are apt to follow
The chase with such an ardour as will scarce
Permit you to return to-day, or if
Return'd, too much fatigued to join to-morrow
The nobles in our marshall'd ranks.

ULRIC.

You, Count,
Will well supply the place of both—I am not
A lover of these pageantries.

SIEGENDORF.

No, Ulric;
It were not well that you alone of all
Our young nobility——

IDA.

And far the noblest
In aspect and demeanour.

SIEGENDORF (*to* IDA).

True, dear child,
Though somewhat frankly said for a fair damsel.—
But, Ulric, recollect too our position,
So lately re-instated in our honours.
Believe me, 'twould be mark'd in any house,

But most in *ours*, that ONE should be found wanting
At such a time and place. Besides, the Heaven
Which gave us back our own, in the same moment
It spread its Peace o'er all, hath double claims
On us for thanksgiving; first, for our country,
And next, that we are here to share its blessings.

ULRIC (*aside*).

Devout, too! Well, sir, I obey at once.
(*Then aloud to a Servant*).
Ludwig, dismiss the train without! [*Exit* LUDWIG.

IDA.

And so
You yield at once to him what I for hours
Might supplicate in vain.

SIEGENDORF (*smiling*).

You are not jealous
Of me, I trust, my pretty Rebel! who
Would sanction disobedience against all
Except thyself? But fear not, thou shalt rule him
Hereafter with a fonder sway and firmer.

IDA.

But I should like to govern *now*.

SIEGENDORF.

You shall,
Your *harp*, which by the way awaits you with
The Countess in her chamber. She complains
That you are a sad truant to your music:
She attends you.

IDA.

Then good morrow, my kind kinsmen!
Ulric, you'll come and hear me?

ULRIC.

By and by.

IDA.

Be sure I 'll sound it better than your bugles;
Then pray you be as punctual to its notes:-
I 'll play you King Gustavus' march.

ULRIC.

And why not
Old Tilly's?

IDA.

Not that monster's! I should think
My harp-strings rang with groans, and not with music,
Could aught of *his* sound on it;—but come quickly;
Your mother will be eager to receive you. [*Exit* IDA.

SIEGENDORF.

Ulric, I wish to speak with you alone.

ULRIC.

My Time's your Vassal.— (*Aside to* RODOLPH.)
Rodolph, hence! and do
As I directed; and by his best speed
And readiest means let Rosenberg reply.

RODOLPH.

Count Siegendorf, command you aught? I am bound
Upon a journey past the frontier.

SIEGENDORF (*starts*).

Ah!—
Where? on *what* frontier?

RODOLPH.

The Silesian, on
My way—(*Aside to* ULRIC). *Where* shall I say?

ULRIC (*aside to* RODOLPH).

To Hamburgh.

(*Aside to himself*). That
Word will I think put a firm padlock on
His further inquisition.

RODOLPH.

Count, to Hamburgh.

SIEGENDORF (*agitated*).

Hamburgh! no, I have nought to do there, nor
Am aught connected with that city. Then
God speed you!

RODOLPH.

Fare ye well, Count Siegendorf!

[*Exit* RODOLPH.

SIEGENDORF.

Ulric, this man, who has just departed, is
One of those strange companions, whom I fain
Would reason with you on.

ULRIC.

My lord, he is
Noble by birth, of one of the first houses
In Saxony.

SIEGENDORF.

I talk not of his birth,
But of his bearing. Men speak lightly of him.

ULRIC.

So they will do of most men. Even the Monarch
Is not fenced from his chamberlain's slander, or
The sneer of the last courtier whom he has made
Great and ungrateful.

SIEGENDORF.

If I must be plain,
The World speaks more than lightly of this Rodolph;
They say he is leagued with the "black bands" who still
Ravage the frontier.

ULRIC.

And will you believe
The world?

SIEGENDORF.

In this case—yes.

ULRIC.

In *any* case,
I thought you knew it better than to take
An accusation for a sentence.

SIEGENDORF.

Son!
I understand you: you refer to——but
My Destiny has so involved about me
Her spider web, that I can only flutter
Like the poor fly, but break it not. Take heed,
Ulric; you have seen to what the passions led me;
Twenty long years of misery and famine
Quench'd them not—twenty thousand more, perchance,
Hereafter (or even here in *moments* which
Might date for years, did Anguish make the dial),
May not obliterate or expiate
The madness and dishonour of an instant.
Ulric, be warn'd by a father!—I was not
By mine, and you behold me!

ULRIC.

I behold

The prosperous and beloved Siegendorf,
Lord of a prince's appanage, and honour'd
By those he rules, and those he ranks with.

SIEGENDORF.

Ah!
Why wilt thou call me prosperous, while I fear
For thee? Beloved, when thou lovest me not!
All hearts but one may beat in kindness for me—
But if my son's is cold!——

ULRIC.

Who *dare* say that?

SIEGENDORF.

None else but I, who see it—*feel* it—keener
Than would your adversary, who dared say so,
Your sabre in his heart! But mine survives
The wound.

ULRIC.

You err. My nature is not given
To outward fondling; how should it be so,
After twelve years' divorcement from my parents?

SIEGENDORF.

And did not *I* too pass those twelve torn years
In a like absence? But 'tis vain to urge you—
Nature was never call'd back by remonstrance.
Let 's change the theme. I wish you to consider
That these young violent nobles of high name,
But dark deeds (ay, the darkest, if all Rumour
Reports be true), with whom thou consortest,
Will lead thee——

ULRIC (*impatiently*).

I 'll be *led* by no man.

SIEGENDORF.

Nor
Be leader of such, I would hope: at once
To wean thee from the perils of thy youth
And haughty spirit, I have thought it well
That thou should'st wed the lady Ida—more,
As thou appear'st to love her.

ULRIC.

I have said
I will obey your orders, were they to
Unite with Hecate—can a son say more?

SIEGENDORF.

He says too much in saying this. It is not
The nature of thine age, nor of thy blood,
Nor of thy temperament, to talk so coolly,
Or act so carelessly, in that which is
The bloom or blight of all men's happiness,
(For Glory's pillow is but restless if
Love lay not down his cheek there): some strong bias,
Some master fiend is in thy service to
Misrule the mortal who believes him slave,
And makes his every thought subservient; else
Thou'dst say at once, "I love young Ida, and
Will wed her," or, "I love her not, and all
The powers of earth shall never make me."—So
Would I have answer'd.

ULRIC.

Sir, *you wed* for love.

SIEGENDORF.

I did, and it has been my only refuge
In many miseries.

ULRIC.

Which miseries
Had never been but for this love-match.

SIEGENDORF.

Still
Against your age and nature! who at twenty
E'er answer'd thus till now?

ULRIC.

Did you not warn me
Against your own example?

SIEGENDORF.

Boyish sophist!
In a word, do you love, or love not, Ida?

ULRIC.

What matters it, if I am ready to
Obey you in espousing her?

SIEGENDORF.

As far
As you feel, nothing, but all life for her.
She's young—all-beautiful—adores you—is
Endow'd with qualities to give happiness,
Such as rounds common life into a dream
Of something which your poets cannot paint,
And (if it were not wisdom to love virtue)
For which Philosophy might barter Wisdom;
And giving so much happiness, deserves
A little in return. I would not have her
Break her heart for a man who has none to break,
Or wither on her stalk like some pale rose
Deserted by the bird she thought a nightingale,
According to the Orient tale. She is——

ULRIC.

The daughter of dead Stralenheim, your foe:
I'll wed her, ne'ertheless; though, to say truth,
Just now I am not violently transported
In favour of such unions.

SIEGENDORF.

But she loves you.

ULRIC.

And I love her, and therefore would think *twice*.

SIEGENDORF.

Alas! Love never *did* so.

ULRIC.

Then 'tis time
He should begin, and take the bandage from
His eyes, and look before he leaps: till now
He hath ta'en a jump i' the dark.

SIEGENDORF.

But you consent?

ULRIC.

I did and do.

SIEGENDORF.

Then fix the day.

ULRIC.

'Tis usual,
And, certes, courteous, to leave that to the lady.

SIEGENDORF.

I will engage for *her*.

ULRIC.

So will not *I*
For any woman; and as what I fix,

I fain would see unshaken, when she gives
Her answer, I'll give mine.

SIEGENDORF.

But 'tis your office
To woo.

ULRIC.

Count, 'tis a marriage of your making,
So be it of your wooing; but to please you
I will now pay my duty to my mother,
With whom, you know, the lady Ida is—
What would you have? You have forbid my stirring
For manly sports beyond the castle walls,
And I obey; you bid me turn a chamberer,
To pick up gloves, and fans, and knitting-needles,
And list to songs and tunes, and watch for smiles,
And smile at pretty prattle, and look into
The eyes of feminie, as though they were
The stars receding early to our wish
Upon the dawn of a World-winning battle—
What can a son or man do more? [*Exit* ULRIC.

SIEGENDORF (*solus*).

Too much!—
Too much of duty and too little love!
He pays me in the coin he owes me not:
For such hath been my wayward fate, I could not
Fulfil a parent's duties by his side
Till now; but love he owes me, for my thoughts
Ne'er left him, nor my eyes long'd without tears
To see my child again, and now I have found him!
But how! obedient, but with coldness; duteous

In my sight, but with carelessness; mysterious,
Abstracted—distant—much given to long absence,
And where—none know—in league with the most riotous
Of our young nobles; though, to do him justice,
He never stoops down to their vulgar pleasures;
Yet there's some tie between them which I cannot
Unravel. They look up to him—consult him—
Throng round him as a leader: but with me
He hath no confidence! Ah! can I hope it
After—what! doth my father's curse descend
Even to my child? Or is the Hungarian near
To shed more blood, or—oh! if it should be!
Spirit of Stralenheim, dost thou walk these walls
To wither him and his—who, though they slew not,
Unlatch'd the door of death for thee? 'Twas not
Our fault, nor is our sin: thou wert our foe,
And yet I spared thee when my own Destruction
Slept with thee, to awake with thine awakening!
And only took—accursed Gold! thou liest
Like poison in my hands; I dare not use thee,
Nor part from thee; thou cam'st in such a guise,
Methinks thou wouldst contaminate all hands
Like mine. Yet I have done, to atone for thee,
Thou villanous Gold! and thy dead master's doom,
Though he died not by me or mine, as much
As if he were my brother! I have ta'en
His orphan Ida—cherish'd her as one
Who will be mine.

Enter an ATTENDANT.

ATTENDANT.

The abbot, if it please
Your excellency, whom you sent for, waits
Upon you. [*Exit* ATTENDANT.

Enter the PRIOR ALBERT.

PRIOR ALBERT.

Peace be with these walls, and all
Within them!

SIEGENDORF.

Welcome, welcome, holy father!
And may thy prayer be heard!—all men have need
Of such, and I——

PRIOR ALBERT.

Have the first claim to all
The prayers of our community. Our convent,
Erected by your ancestors, is still
Protected by their children.

SIEGENDORF.

Yes, good father;
Continue daily orisons for us
In these dim days of heresies and blood,
Though the schismatic Swede, Gustavus, is
Gone home.

PRIOR ALBERT.

To the endless home of unbelievers,
Where there is everlasting wail and woe,
Gnashing of teeth, and tears of blood, and fire
Eternal, and the worm which dieth not!

SIEGENDORF.

True, father: and to avert those pangs from one,
Who, though of our most faultless, holy church,
Yet died without its last and dearest offices,
Which smooth the soul through purgatorial pains,
I have to offer humbly this donation
In masses for his spirit.

[SIEGENDORF *offers the gold which he had taken from* STRALENHEIM.

PRIOR ALBERT.

Count, if I
Receive it, 'tis because I know too well
Refusal would offend you. Be assured
The largess shall be only dealt in alms,
And every mass no less sung for the dead.
Our house needs no donations, thanks to yours,
Which has of old endow'd it; but from you
And yours in all meet things 'tis fit we obey;
For whom shall mass be said?

SIEGENDORF (*faltering*).

For—for—the dead.

PRIOR ALBERT.

His name?

SIEGENDORF.

'Tis from a Soul, and not a Name,
I would avert perdition.

PRIOR ALBERT.

I meant not
To pry into your secret. We will pray
For one unknown, the same as for the proudest.

SIEGENDORF.

Secret! I have none; but, father, he who's gone
Might *have* one; or, in short, he did bequeath—
No, not bequeath—but I bestow this sum
For pious purposes.

PRIOR ALBERT.

A proper deed
In the behalf of our departed friends.

SIEGENDORF.

But he, who's gone, was not my friend, but foe,
The deadliest and the staunchest.

PRIOR ALBERT.

Better still!
To employ our means to obtain heaven for the souls
Of our dead enemies, is worthy those
Who can forgive them living.

SIEGENDORF.

But I did not
Forgive this man. I loath'd him to the last,
As he did me. I do not love him now,
But——

PRIOR ALBERT.

Best of all! for this is pure religion!
You fain would rescue him you hate from hell—
An evangelical compassion!—with
Your own gold too!

SIEGENDORF.

Father, 'tis not my gold.

PRIOR ALBERT.

Whose then? you said it was no legacy.

SIEGENDORF.

No matter whose—of this be sure, that he
Who own'd it never more will need it, save
In that which it may purchase from your altars:
'Tis yours, or theirs.

PRIOR ALBERT.

Is there no blood upon it?

SIEGENDORF.

No; but there's worse than blood—eternal shame!

PRIOR ALBERT.

Did he who own'd it die in his *bed?*

SIEGENDORF.

Alas!
He did.

PRIOR ALBERT.

Son! you relapse into revenge,
If you regret your enemy's bloodless death.

SIEGENDORF.

His death was fathomlessly deep in blood.

PRIOR ALBERT.

You said he died in his bed, not battle.

SIEGENDORF.

He
Died, I scarce know—but—he was stabb'd i' the dark,
And now you have it—perish'd on his pillow
By a cut-throat!—ay!—you may look upon me!
I am *not* the man. I'll meet your eye on that point,
As I can one day, God's.

PRIOR ALBERT.

Nor did he die
By means, or men, or instrument of yours?

SIEGENDORF.

No! by the God who sees and strikes!

PRIOR ALBERT.

Nor know you
Who slew him?

SIEGENDORF.

I could only guess at *one*,
And he to me a stranger, unconnected,
As unemploy'd. Except by one day's knowledge,
I never saw the man who was suspected.

PRIOR ALBERT.

Then you are free from guilt.

SIEGENDORF (*eagerly*).

Oh! *am* I?—say!

PRIOR ALBERT.

You have said so, and know best.

SIEGENDORF.

Father! I have spoken
The truth, and nought but truth, if *not* the *whole:*
Yet say I am *not* guilty! for the blood
Of this man weighs on me, as if I shed it,
Though by the Power who abhorreth human blood,
I did not!—nay, once spared it, when I might
And *could*—ay, perhaps, *should*, (if our Self-Safety
Be e'er excusable in such defences
Against the attacks of over-potent foes);
But pray for him, for me, and all my house;
For, as I said, though I be innocent,
I know not why, a like Remorse is on me,
As if he had fallen by me or mine. Pray for me,
Father! I have pray'd myself in vain.

PRIOR ALBERT.

I will.

Be comforted! You are innocent, and should
Be calm as Innocence.

SIEGENDORF.

But Calmness is not
Always the attribute of Innocence:
I feel it is not.

PRIOR ALBERT.

But it will be so,
When the mind gathers up its truth within it.
Remember the great festival to-morrow,
In which you rank amidst our chiefest nobles,
As well as your brave son; and smooth your aspect;
Nor in the general orison of thanks
For bloodshed stopt, let blood, you shed not, rise
A cloud upon your thoughts. This were to be
Too sensitive. Take comfort, and forget
Such things, and leave Remorse unto the guilty.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT V.—SCENE I.

A large and magnificent Gothic Hall in the Castle of Siegendorf, decorated with Trophies, Banners, and Arms of that Family.

Enter ARNHEIM *and* MEISTER, *Attendants of* COUNT SIEGENDORF.

ARNHEIM.

Be quick! the Count will soon return: the ladies
Already are at the portal. Have you sent
The messengers in search of him he seeks for?

MEISTER.

I have, in all directions, over Prague,
As far as the man's dress and figure could
By your description track him. The devil take
These revels and processions! All the pleasure
(If such there be) must fall to the spectators.
I'm sure none doth to us who make the show.

ARNHEIM.

Go to! my lady Countess comes.

MEISTER.

I'd rather
Ride a day's hunting on an outworn jade,
Than follow in the train of a great man
In these dull pageantries.

ARNHEIM.

Begone! and rail
Within. [*Exeunt.*

Enter the COUNTESS JOSEPHINE SIEGENDORF *and* IDA STRALENHEIM.

JOSEPHINE.

Well, Heaven be praised, the show is over!

IDA.

How can you say so! Never have I dreamt
Of aught so beautiful. The flowers, the boughs,
The banners, and the nobles, and the knights,
The gems, the robes, the plumes, the happy faces,
The coursers, and the incense, and the sun
Streaming through the stain'd windows, even the *tombs*,
Which look'd so calm, and the celestial hymns,
Which seem'd as if they rather came from heaven
Than mounted there. The bursting organ's peal
Rolling on high like an harmonious thunder;
The white robes, and the lifted eyes; the World
At peace! and all at peace with one another!
Oh, my sweet mother! [*Embracing* JOSEPHINE.

JOSEPHINE.

My beloved child!
For such, I trust, thou shalt be shortly.

IDA.

Oh!
I am so already. Feel how my heart beats!

JOSEPHINE.

It does, my Love; and never may it throb
With aught more bitter!

IDA.

Never shall it do so!
How should it? What should make us grieve? I hate
To hear of sorrow: how can we be sad,
Who love each other so entirely? You,
The Count, and Ulric, and your daughter, Ida.

JOSEPHINE.

Poor child!

IDA.

Do you pity me?

JOSEPHINE.

No; I but envy,
And that in sorrow, not in the world's sense
Of the universal vice, if one vice be
More general than another.

IDA.

I'll not hear
A word against a world which still contains
You and my Ulric. Did you ever see
Aught like him? How he tower'd amongst them all!
How all eyes follow'd him! The flowers fell faster—
Rain'd from each lattice at his feet, methought,
Than before all the rest, and where he trod
I dare be sworn that they grow still, nor e'er
Will wither.

JOSEPHINE.

You will spoil him, little flatterer,
If he should hear you.

IDA.

But he never will.
I dare not say so much to him—I fear him.

JOSEPHINE.

Why so? he loves you well.

IDA.

But I can never
Shape my thoughts *of* him into words *to* him.
Besides, he sometimes frightens me.

JOSEPHINE.

How so?

IDA.

A cloud comes o'er his blue eyes suddenly,
Yet he says nothing.

JOSEPHINE.

It is nothing: all men,
Especially in these dark troublous times,
Have much to think of.

IDA.

But I cannot think
Of aught save him.

JOSEPHINE.

Yet there are other men
In the world's eye, as goodly. There's, for instance,
The young Count Waldorf, who scarce once withdrew
His eyes from yours to-day.

IDA.

I did not see him,
But Ulric. Did you not see at the moment
When all knelt, and I wept? and yet methought
Through my fast tears, though they were thick and warm,
I saw him smiling on me.

JOSEPHINE.

I could not

See aught save Heaven, to which my eyes were raised
Together with the people's.

IDA.

I thought too
Of Heaven, although I look'd on Ulric.

JOSEPHINE.

Come,
Let us retire; they will be here anon
Expectant of the banquet. We will lay
Aside these nodding plumes and dragging trains.

IDA.

And, above all, these stiff and heavy jewels,
Which make my head and heart ache, as both throb
Beneath their glitter o'er my brow and zone.
Dear mother, I am with you.

Enter COUNT SIEGENDORF, *in full dress, from the solemnity, and* LUDWIG.

SIEGENDORF.

Is he not found?

LUDWIG.

Strict search is making every where; and if
The man be in Prague, be sure he will be found.

SIEGENDORF.

Where 's Ulric?

LUDWIG.

He rode round the other way
With some young nobles; but he left them soon;
And, if I err not, not a minute since
I heard his Excellency, with his train,
Gallop o'er the West drawbridge.

Enter ULRIC, *splendidly dressed.*

SIEGENDORF (*to* LUDWIG).

See they cease not
Their quest of him I have described. (*Exit* LUDWIG.)
Oh! Ulric,
How have I long'd for thee!

ULRIC.

Your wish is granted—
Behold me!

SIEGENDORF.

I have seen the murderer.

ULRIC.

Whom? Where?

SIEGENDORF.

The Hungarian, who slew Stralenheim.

ULRIC.

You dream.

SIEGENDORF.

I live! and as I live, I saw him—
Heard him! He dared to utter even my name.

ULRIC.

What name?

SIEGENDORF.

Werner! *'twas* mine.

ULRIC.

It must be so
No more: forget it.

SIEGENDORF.

Never! never! all
My destinies were woven in that name:

It will not be engraved upon my tomb,
But it may lead me there.

ULRIC.

To the point—the Hungarian?

SIEGENDORF.

Listen!—The church was throng'd; the hymn was raised;
"*Te Deum*" pealed from Nations, rather than
From choirs, in one great cry of "God be praised"
For one day's peace, after thrice ten dread years,
Each bloodier than the former: I arose,
With all the nobles, and as I look'd down
Along the lines of lifted faces,—from
Our banner'd and escutcheon'd gallery, I
Saw, like a flash of lightning (for I saw
A moment, and no more), what struck me sightless
To all else—the Hungarian's face; I grew
Sick; and when I recover'd from the mist
Which curl'd about my senses, and again
Look'd down, I saw him not. The thanksgiving
Was over, and we march'd back in procession.

ULRIC.

Continue.

SIEGENDORF.

When we reach'd the Muldau's bridge,
The joyous crowd above, the numberless
Barks mann'd with revellers in their best garbs,
Which shot along the glancing tide below,
The decorated street, the long array,
The clashing music, and the thundering
Of far Artillery, which seem'd to bid

A long and loud farewel to its great doings,
The standards o'er me, and the tramplings round,
The roar of rushing thousands,—all—all could not
Chase this man from my mind; although my senses
No longer held him palpable.

ULRIC.

You saw him
No more, then?

SIEGENDORF.

I look'd, as a dying soldier
Looks at a draught of water, for this man;
But still I saw him not; but in his stead—

ULRIC.

What in his stead?

SIEGENDORF.

My eye for ever fell
Upon your dancing crest; the loftiest,
As on the loftiest and the loveliest head
It rose the highest of the stream of plumes,
Which overflow'd the glittering streets of Prague.

ULRIC.

What's this to the Hungarian?

SIEGENDORF.

Much; for I
Had almost then forgot him in my son,
When just as the Artillery ceased, and paused
The Music, and the crowd embraced in lieu
Of shouting, I heard in a deep, low voice,
Distinct, and keener far upon my ear
Than the late Cannon's Volume, this word—"*Werner!*"

ULRIC.

Uttered by——

SIEGENDORF.

HIM! I turn'd—and saw—and fell.

ULRIC.

And wherefore? Were you seen?

SIEGENDORF.

The officious care
Of those around me dragg'd me from the spot,
Seeing my faintness, ignorant of the cause;
You, too, were too remote in the procession
(The old nobles being divided from their children)
To aid me.

ULRIC.

But I 'll aid you now.

SIEGENDORF.

In what?

ULRIC.

In searching for this man, or——When he 's found,
What shall we do with him?

SIEGENDORF.

I know not that.

ULRIC.

Then wherefore seek?

SIEGENDORF.

Because I cannot rest
Till he is found. His fate, and Stralenheim's,
And ours, seem intertwisted; nor can be
Unravell'd, till——

Enter an ATTENDANT.

ATTENDANT.

A stranger, to wait on
Your Excellency.

SIEGENDORF.

Who?

ATTENDANT.

He gave no name.

SIEGENDORF.

Admit him, ne'ertheless.

[*The* ATTENDANT *introduces* GABOR, *and afterwards exit.*

Ah!

GABOR.

'Tis, then, Werner!

SIEGENDORF (*haughtily*).

The same you knew, Sir, by that name; and *you!*

GABOR (*looking round*).

I recognise you both; father and son,
It seems. Count, I have heard that you, or yours,
Have lately been in search of me: I am here.

SIEGENDORF.

I have sought you, and have found you; you are charged
(Your own heart may inform you why) with such
A crime as—— [*He pauses.*

GABOR.

Give it utterance, and then
I'll meet the consequences.

SIEGENDORF.

You shall do so—
Unless——

GABOR.

First, who accuses me?

SIEGENDORF.

All things,
If not all men: the universal rumour—
My own presence on the spot—the place—the time—
And every speck of circumstance unite
To fix the blot on you.

GABOR.

And on *me only?*
Pause ere you answer: Is no other name,
Save mine, stain'd in this business?

SIEGENDORF.

Trifling villain!
Who play'st with thine own guilt! Of all that breathe
'Thou best dost know the innocence of him
Gainst whom thy breath would blow thy bloody slander.
But I will talk no further with a wretch,
Further than Justice asks. Answer at once,
And without quibbling, to my charge.

GABOR.

'Tis false!

SIEGENDORF.

Who says so?

GABOR.

I.

SIEGENDORF.

And how disprove it?

GABOR.

By
The presence of the murderer.

SIEGENDORF.

Name him!

GABOR.

He
May have more names than one. Your lordship had
so
Once on a time.

SIEGENDORF.

If you mean me, I dare
Your utmost.

GABOR.

You may do so, and in safety,
I know the assassin.

SIEGENDORF.

Where is he?

GABOR (*pointing to* ULRIC).

Beside you!

[ULRIC *rushes forward to attack* GABOR; SIEGENDORF *interposes.*

SIEGENDORF.

Liar and fiend! but you shall not be slain;
These walls are mine, and you are safe within them.
[*He turns to* ULRIC.
Ulric, repel this calumny, as I
Will do. I avow it is a growth so monstrous,
I could not deem it earth-born: but, be calm;
It will refute itself. But touch him not.
[ULRIC *endeavours to compose himself.*

GABOR.

Look at *him*, Count, and then *hear me.*

SIEGENDORF (*first to* GABOR, *and then looking at* ULRIC).
I hear thee.
My God! you look——

ULRIC.
How?

SIEGENDORF.
As on that dread night
When we met in the garden.

ULRIC (*composes himself*).
It is nothing.

GABOR.
Count, you are bound to hear me. I came hither
Not seeking you, but sought. When I knelt down
Amidst the People in the Church, I dream'd not
To find the beggar'd Werner in the seat
Of Senators and Princes; but you have call'd me,
And we have met.

SIEGENDORF.
Go on, Sir.

GABOR.
Ere I do so,
Allow me to inquire who profited
By Stralenheim's death? Was't I—as poor as ever;
And poorer by Suspicion on my name.
The Baron lost in that last outrage neither
Jewels nor gold; his Life alone was sought,—
A life which stood between the claims of others
To honours and estates, scarce less than princely.

SIEGENDORF.
These hints, as vague as vain, attach no less
To me than to my son.

GABOR.

I can't help that.
But let the consequence alight on him
Who feels himself the guilty one amongst us.
I speak to you, Count Siegendorf, because
I know you innocent, and deem you just.
But ere I can proceed—*Dare* you protect me?—
Dare you command me?

[SIEGENDORF *first looks at the Hungarian, and then at* ULRIC, *who has unbuckled his sabre and is drawing lines with it on the floor—still in its sheath.*

ULRIC (*looks at his father and says*)

Let the man go on!

GABOR.

I am unarm'd, Count—bid your son lay down
His sabre.

ULRIC (*offers it to him contemptuously*).

Take it.

GABOR.

No, Sir, 'tis enough
That we are both unarm'd—I would not choose
To wear a steel which may be stain'd with more
Blood than came there in battle.

ULRIC (*casts the sabre from him in contempt*).

It—or some
Such other weapon, in my hands—spared yours
Once when disarm'd and at my mercy.

GABOR.

True—
I have not forgotten it: you spared me for

Your own especial purpose—to sustain
An ignominy not my own.

ULRIC.

Proceed.

The tale is doubtless worthy the relater.
But is it of my father to hear further? [*To* SIEGENDORF.

SIEGENDORF *(takes his son by the hand).*

My son! I know my own innocence—and doubt not
Of yours—but I have promised this man patience;
Let him continue.

GABOR.

I will not detain you
By speaking of myself much; I began
Life early—and am what the world has made me.
At Frankfort on the Oder, where I pass'd
A winter in obscurity, it was
My chance at several places of resort
(Which I frequented sometimes but not often)
To hear related a strange circumstance
In February last. A martial force,
Sent by the state, had after strong resistance
Secured a band of desperate men, supposed
Marauders from the hostile camp.—They proved,
However, not to be so—but banditti,
Whom either accident or enterprise
Had carried from their usual haunt—the forests
Which skirt Bohemia—even into Lusatia.
Many amongst them were reported of
High rank—and martial law slept for a time.
At last they were escorted o'er the frontiers,

And placed beneath the civil jurisdiction
Of the free town of Frankfort. Of *their* fate,
I know no more.

SIEGENDORF.

And what is this to Ulric?

GABOR.

Amongst them there was said to be one man
Of wonderful endowments:—birth and fortune,
Youth, strength and beauty, almost superhuman,
And courage as unrivalled, were proclaim'd
His by the public rumour; and his sway
Not only over his associates, but
His judges, was attributed to witchcraft.
Such was his influence:—I have no great faith
In any Magic save that of the Mine—
I therefore deem'd him wealthy.—But my Soul
Was roused with various feelings to seek out
This Prodigy, if only to behold him.

SIEGENDORF.

And did you so?

GABOR.

You 'll hear. Chance favour'd me:
A popular affray in the public square
Drew crowds together—it was one of those
Occasions, where men's souls look out of them,
And show them as they are—even in their faces:
The moment my eye met his—I exclaim'd
" This is the man!" though he was then, as since,
With the nobles of the city. I felt sure
I had not err'd, and watch'd him long and nearly:

I noted down his form—his gesture—features,
Stature and bearing—and amidst them all,
Midst every natural and acquired distinction,
I could discern, methought, the assassin's eye
And gladiator's heart.

ULRIC (*smiling*).

The tale sounds well.

GABOR.

And may sound better.—He appear'd to me
One of those beings to whom Fortune bends
As she doth to the Daring—and on whom
The Fates of others oft depend; besides,
An indescribable sensation drew me
Near to this man, as if my Point of Fortune
Was to be fix'd by him.—There I was wrong.

SIEGENDORF.

And may not be right now.

GABOR.

I follow'd him,
Solicited his notice—and obtain'd it—
Though not his friendship:—it was his intention
To leave the city privately—we left it
Together—and together we arrived
In the poor town where Werner was conceal'd,
And Stralenheim was succour'd——Now we are on
The verge—*dare* you hear further?

SIEGENDORF.

I must do so—
Or I have heard too much.

GABOR.

I saw in you

A man above his station—and if not
So high, as now I find you, in my then
Conceptions—'twas that I had rarely seen
Men such as you appear'd in height of mind,
In the most high of worldly rank; you were
Poor—even to all save rags—I would have shared
My purse, though slender, with you—you refused it.

SIEGENDORF.

Doth my refusal make a debt to you,
That thus you urge it?

GABOR.

Still you owe me something,
Though not for that—and I owed you my safety,
At least my seeming safety—when the slaves
Of Stralenheim pursued me on the grounds
That *I* had robb'd him.

SIEGENDORF.

I conceal'd you—I,
Whom, and whose house, you arraign, reviving viper!

GABOR.

I accuse no man—save in my defence.
You, Count! have made yourself accuser—judge—
Your hall's my court, your heart is my tribunal.
Be just, and *I'll* be merciful.

SIEGENDORF.

You merciful!
You! Base calumniator!

GABOR.

I. 'Twill rest
With me at last to be so. You conceal'd me—

In secret passages known to yourself,
You said, and to none else. At dead of night,
Weary with watching in the dark, and dubious
Of tracing back my way—I saw a glimmer
Through distant crannies of a twinkling light.
I follow'd it, and reach'd a door—a secret
Portal—which open'd to the chamber, where,
With cautious hand and slow, having first undone
As much as made a crevice of the fastening,
I look'd through, and beheld a purple bed,
And on it Stralenheim!—

SIEGENDORF.

Asleep! And yet
You slew him—Wretch!

GABOR.

He was already slain,
And bleeding like a Sacrifice. My own
Blood became ice.

SIEGENDORF.

But he was all alone!
You saw none else? You did not see the——

[*He pauses from agitation.*

GABOR.

No,
He, whom you dare not name—nor even I
Scarce dare to recollect, was not then in
The chamber.

SIEGENDORF (*to* ULRIC).

Then, my boy! thou art guiltless still—
Thou bad'st me say *I* was so once—Oh! now
Do thou as much!

GABOR.

Be patient! I can *not*
Recede now, though it shake the very walls
Which frown above us. You remember, or
If not, your son does,—that, the locks were changed
Beneath *his* chief inspection—on the morn
Which led to this same night: how he had enter'd,
He best knows—but within an antechamber,
The door of which was half ajar—I saw
A man who wash'd his bloody hands, and oft
With stern and anxious glance gazed back upon
The bleeding body—but it moved no more.

SIEGENDORF.

Oh! God of Fathers!

GABOR.

I beheld his features
As I see yours—but yours they were not, though
Resembling them—behold them in Count Ulric's!
Distinct—as I beheld them—though the expression
Is not now what it then was;—but it was so
When I first charged him with the crime:—so lately.

SIEGENDORF.

This is so——

GABOR (*interrupting him*).

Nay—but hear me to the end!
Now you must do so.—I conceived myself
Betray'd by you and *him* (for now I saw
There was some tie between you) into this
Pretended den of refuge, to become
The victim of your guilt; and my first thought

Was vengeance: but though arm'd with a short poignard
(Having left my sword without) I was no match
For him at any time, as had been proved
That Morning—either in address or force.
I turn'd, and fled—i'the dark: Chance rather than
Skill made me gain the secret door of the hall,
And thence the chamber where you slept—if I
Had found you *waking*, Heaven alone can tell
What Vengeance and Suspicion might have prompted;
But ne'er slept Guilt as Werner slept that night.

SIEGENDORF.

And yet I had horrid dreams! and such brief sleep—
The stars had not gone down when I awoke—
Why didst thou spare me? I dreamt of my father—
And now my dream is out!

GABOR.

'Tis not my fault,
If I have read it.—Well! I fled and hid me—
Chance led me here after so many moons—
And show'd me Werner in Count Siegendorf!
Werner, whom I had sought in huts in vain,
Inhabited the Palace of a Sovereign!
You sought me, and have found me—now you know
My secret, and may weigh its worth.

SIEGENDORF (*after a pause*).

Indeed!

GABOR.

Is it Revenge or Justice which inspires
Your Meditation?

SIEGENDORF.

Neither—I was weighing
The value of your secret.

GABOR.

You shall know it
At once—when you were poor, and I, though poor,
Rich enough to relieve such poverty
As might have envied mine, I offer'd you
My purse—you would not share it:—I 'll be franker
With you; you are wealthy, noble, trusted by
The Imperial powers—You understand me?

SIEGENDORF.

Yes.—

GABOR.

Not quite. You think me venal, and scarce true:
'Tis no less true, however, that my fortunes
Have made me both at present; you shall aid me,
I would have aided you—and also have
Been somewhat damaged in my name to save
Yours and your son's. Weigh well what I have said.

SIEGENDORF.

Dare you await the event of a few minutes'
Deliberation?

GABOR (*casts his eyes on* ULRIC, *who is leaning against a pillar*).

If I should do so?

SIEGENDORF.

I pledge my life for yours. Withdraw into
This tower. [*Opens a turret door*

GABOR (*hesitatingly*).

This is the second *safe* asylum
You have offer'd me.

SIEGENDORF.

And was not the first so?

GABOR.

I know not that even now—but will approve
The second. I have still a further shield.—
I did not enter Prague alone—and should I
Be put to rest with Stralenheim—there are
Some tongues without will wag in my behalf.
Be brief in your decision!

SIEGENDORF.

I will be so.—
My word is sacred and irrevocable
Within *these* walls, but it extends no further.

GABOR.

I'll take it for so much.

SIEGENDORF (*points to* ULRIC'S *sabre, still upon the ground*).

Take also *that*—
I saw you eye it eagerly, and him
Distrustfully.

GABOR (*takes up the sabre*).

I will; and so provide
To sell my life—not cheaply.

[GABOR *goes into the turret, which* SIEGENDORF *closes.*

SIEGENDORF (*advances to* ULRIC).

Now, Count Ulric!
For son I dare not call thee—What say'st thou?

ULRIC.

His tale is true.

SIEGENDORF.

True, monster!

ULRIC.

Most true, father;
And you did well to listen to it: what
We know, we can provide against. He must
Be silenced.

SIEGENDORF.

Ay, with half of my domains;
And with the other half, could he and thou
Unsay this villany.

ULRIC.

It is no time
For trifling or dissembling. I have said
His story's true; and he too must be silenced.

SIEGENDORF.

How so?

ULRIC.

As Stralenheim is. Are you so dull
As never to have hit on this before?
When we met in the garden, what except
Discovery in the act could make me know
His death? Or had the prince's household been
Then summon'd, would the cry for the police
Been left to such a stranger? Or should I
Have loiter'd on the way? Or could *you*, *Werner*,
The object of the Baron's hate and fears,
Have fled—unless by many an hour before

Suspicion woke? I sought and fathom'd you—
Doubting if you were false or feeble; I
Perceived you were the latter; and yet so
Confiding have I found you, that I doubted
At times your weakness.

SIEGENDORF.

Parricide! no less
Than common stabber! What deed of my life,
Or thought of mine, could make you deem me fit
For your accomplice?

ULRIC.

Father, do not raise
The devil you cannot lay, between us. This
Is time for union and for action, not
For family disputes. While *you* were tortured
Could *I* be calm? Think you that I have heard
This fellow's tale without some feeling? you
Have taught me feeling for *you* and myself;
For whom or what else did you ever teach it?

SIEGENDORF.

Oh! my dead father's curse! 'tis working now.

ULRIC.

Let it work on! the grave will keep it down!
Ashes are feeble foes: it is more easy
To baffle such, than countermine a mole,
Which winds its blind but living path beneath you.
Yet hear me still!—If *you* condemn me, yet
Remember *who* hath taught me once too often
To listen to him! *Who* proclaim'd to me
That *there were crimes* made venial by the occasion?

That passion was our nature? that the goods
Of heaven waited on the goods of fortune?
Who show'd me his humanity secured
By his *nerves* only? *Who* deprived me of
All power to vindicate myself and race
In open day? By his disgrace which stamp'd
(It might be) bastardy on me, and on
Himself—a *felon*'s brand! The man who is
At once both warm and weak, invites to deeds
He longs to do, but dare not. Is it strange
That I should *act* what you could *think?* We have done
With right and wrong; and now must only ponder
Upon effects, not causes. Stralenheim,
Whose life I saved from impulse, as, *unknown*,
I would have saved a peasant's or a dog's, I slew
Known as our foe—but not from vengeance. He
Was a rock in our way which I cut through,
As doth the bolt, because it stood between us
And our true destination—but not idly.
As stranger I preserved him, and he *owed me*
His *life;* when due, I but resumed the debt.
He, you, and I stood o'er a gulf wherein
I have plunged our enemy. *You* kindled first
The torch—*you* show'd the path; now trace me that
Of safety—or let me!

SIEGENDORF.

I have done with life!

ULRIC.

Let us have done with that which cankers life—
Familiar feuds and vain recriminations

Of things which cannot be undone. We have
No more to learn or hide: I know no fear,
And have within these very walls men whom
(Although you know them not) dare venture all things.
You stand high with the state; what passes here
Will not excite her too great curiosity:
Keep your own secret, keep a steady eye,
Stir not, and speak not;—leave the rest to me:
We must have no *third* babblers thrust between us.

[*Exit* ULRIC.

SIEGENDORF (*solus*).

Am I awake? are these my father's halls?
And *yon*—my son? *My* son! *mine!* who have ever
Abhorr'd both mystery and blood, and yet
Am plunged into the deepest hell of both!
I must be speedy, or more will be shed—
The Hungarian's!—Ulric—he hath partisans,
It seems: I might have guess'd as much. Oh fool!
Wolves prowl in company. He hath the key
(As I too) of the opposite door which leads
Into the turret. Now then! or once more
To be the father of fresh crimes—no less
Than of the criminal! Ho! Gabor! Gabor!

[*Exit into the turret, closing the door after him.*

SCENE II.

The Interior of the Turret.

GABOR *and* SIEGENDORF.

GABOR.

Who calls?

SIEGENDORF.

I—Siegendorf! Take these, and fly!
Lose not a moment!

[*Tears off a diamond star and other jewels, and thrusts them into* GABOR'S *hand.*

GABOR.

What am I to do
With these?

SIEGENDORF.

Whate'er you will: sell them, or hoard,
And prosper; but delay not—or you are lost!

GABOR.

You pledged your honour for my safety!

SIEGENDORF.

And
Must thus redeem it. Fly! I am not master,
It seems, of my own castle—of my own
Retainers—nay, even of these very walls,
Or I would bid them fall and crush me! Fly!
Or you will be slain by——

GABOR.

Is it even so?

Farewell, then! Recollect, however, Count,
You sought this fatal interview!

SIEGENDORF.

I did:

Let it not be more fatal still!—Begone!

GABOR.

By the same path I enter'd?

SIEGENDORF.

Yes; that's safe still:

But loiter not in Prague;—you do not know
With whom you have to deal.

GABOR.

I know too well—

And knew it ere yourself, unhappy sire!
Farewell! [*Exit* GABOR.

SIEGENDORF (*solus and listening*).

He hath clear'd the staircase. Ah! I hear
The door sound loud behind him! He is safe!
Safe!—Oh, my father's spirit!—I am faint——

[*He leans down upon a stone seat, near the wall of the Tower, in a drooping posture.*

Enter ULRIC, *with others armed, and with weapons drawn.*

ULRIC.

Despatch!—he's there!

LUDWIG.

The Count, my Lord!

ULRIC (*recognising* SIEGENDORF).

You here, Sir!

SIEGENDORF.

Yes: if you want another victim, strike!

ULRIC (*seeing him stript of his jewels*).

Where is the ruffian who hath plunder'd you?
Vassals, despatch in search of him! You see
'Twas as I said—the wretch hath stript my father
Of jewels which might form a prince's heirloom!
Away! I'll follow you forthwith.

[*Exeunt all but* SIEGENDORF *and* ULRIC.

What's this?
Where is the villain?

SIEGENDORF.

There are *two*, Sir; which
Are you in quest of?

ULRIC.

Let us hear no more
Of this: he must be found. You have not let him
Escape?

SIEGENDORF.

He's gone.

ULRIC.

With your connivance?

SIEGENDORF.

With
My fullest, freest aid.

ULRIC.

Then fare you well!

[ULRIC *is going.*

SIEGENDORF.

Stop! I command—entreat—implore! Oh, Ulric!
Will you then leave me?

ULRIC.

What! remain to be
Denounced—dragg'd, it may be, in chains; and all
By your inherent weakness, half-humanity,
Selfish remorse, and temporising pity,
That sacrifices your whole race to save
A wretch to profit by our ruin! No, Count,
Henceforth you have no son!

SIEGENDORF.

I never had one;
And would you ne'er had borne the useless name!
Where will you go? I would not send you forth
Without protection.

ULRIC.

Leave that unto me.
I am not alone; nor merely the vain heir
Of your domains: a thousand, ay, ten thousand
Swords, hearts, and hands, are mine.

SIEGENDORF.

The foresters!
With whom the Hungarian found you first at Frankfort?

ULRIC.

Yes—men—who are worthy of the name! Go tell
Your senators that they look well to Prague;
Their feast of peace was early for the Times;
There are more spirits abroad than have been laid
With Wallenstein!

Enter JOSEPHINE *and* IDA.

JOSEPHINE.

What is't we hear? My Siegendorf!
Thank Heav'n, I see you safe!

SIEGENDORF.

Safe!

IDA.

Yes, dear father!

SIEGENDORF.

No, no; I have no children: never more
Call me by that worst name of parent.

JOSEPHINE.

What
Means my good lord?

SIEGENDORF.

That you have given birth
To a demon!

IDA (*taking* ULRIC'S *hand*).

Who shall dare say this of Ulric?

SIEGENDORF.

Ida, beware! there's blood upon that hand.

IDA (*stooping to kiss it*).

I'd kiss it off, though it were mine!

SIEGENDORF.

It is so!

ULRIC.

Away! it is your father's! [*Exit* ULRIC.

IDA.

Oh, great God!
And I have loved this man!

[IDA *falls senseless*—JOSEPHINE *stands speechless with horror.*

SIEGENDORF.

The wretch hath slain
Them both!—My Josephine! we are now alone!
Would we had ever been so!—All is over
For me!—Now open wide, my sire, thy grave;
Thy curse hath dug it deeper for thy son
In mine!—The race of Siegendorf is past!

THE END.

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MAZEPPA,

A POEM.

BY LORD BYRON.

LONDON:
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE-STREET.

1819.

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MAZEPPA.

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" CELUI qui remplissait alors cette place, était un gentil-
" homme Polonais, nommé Mazeppa, né dans le palatinat
" de Padolie; il avait été élevé page de Jean Casimir, et
" avait pris à sa cour quelque teinture des belles-lettres.
" Une intrigue qu'il eut dans sa jeunesse avec la femme d'un
" gentilhomme Polonais, ayant été découverte, le mari le fit lier
" tout nu sur un cheval farouche, et le laissa aller en cet état.
" Le cheval, qui était du pays de l'Ukraine, y retourna, et y
" porta Mazeppa, demi-mort de fatigue et de faim. Quelque
" paysans le secoururent: il resta long-tems parmi eux, et se
" signala dans plusieurs courses contre les Tartares. La
" supériorité de ses lumières lui donna une grande con-
" sidération parmi les Cosaques: sa réputation s'augmentant
" de jour en jour, obligea le Czar à le faire Prince de
" l'Ukraine."—VOLTAIRE, *Histoire de Charles XII.* p. 196.

" Le roi fuyant et poursuivi eut son cheval tué sous lui;
" le Colonel Gieta, blessé, et perdant tout sa sang, lui donna
" le sien. Ainsi on remit deux fois à cheval, dans la suite,
" ce conquérant qui n'avait puy monter pendant la bataille."
VOLTAIRE, *Hist. de Charles XII.* p. 216.

ADVERTISEMENT.

"" Le roi alla par un autre chemin avec quelques cavaliers. " Le carrosse, où il était, rompit dans la marche ; on le remit " à cheval. Pour comble de disgrace, il s'égara pendant la " nuit dans un bois ; là, son courage ne pouvant plus suppléer " à ses forces épuisées, les douleurs de sa blessure devenues " plus insupportable par la fatigue, son cheval étant tombé " de lassitude, il se coucha quelques heures au pied d'un " arbre, en danger d'être surpris à tout moment par les " vainqueurs qui le cherchaient de tout côtés."—VOLTAIRE, *Histoire de Charles XII.* p. 218.

MAZEPPA.

I.

'TWAS after dread Pultowa's day,
When fortune left the royal Swede,
Around a slaughter'd army lay,
No more to combat and to bleed.
The power and glory of the war,
Faithless as their vain votaries, men,
Had pass'd to the triumphant Czar,
And Moscow's walls were safe again,
Until a day more dark and drear,
And a more memorable year,
Should give to slaughter and to shame
A mightier host and haughtier name;
A greater wreck, a deeper fall,
A shock to one—a thunderbolt to all.

II.

Such was the hazard of the die;
The wounded Charles was taught to fly
By day and night through field and flood,
Stain'd with his own and subjects' blood;
For thousands fell that flight to aid:
And not a voice was heard t'upbraid
Ambition in his humbled hour,
When truth had nought to dread from power.
His horse was slain, and Gieta gave
His own—and died the Russians' slave.
This too sinks after many a league
Of well sustain'd, but vain fatigue;
And in the depth of forests, darkling
The watch-fires in the distance sparkling—
The beacons of surrounding foes—
A king must lay his limbs at length.
Are these the laurels and repose
For which the nations strain their strength?
They laid him by a savage tree,
In out-worn nature's agony;
His wounds were stiff—his limbs were stark—
The heavy hour was chill and dark;

The fever in his blood forbade
A transient slumber's fitful aid:
And thus it was; but yet through all,
Kinglike the monarch bore his fall,
And made, in this extreme of ill,
His pangs the vassals of his will;
All silent and subdued were they,
As once the nations round him lay.

III.

A band of chiefs!—alas! how few,
Since but the fleeting of a day
Had thinn'd it; but this wreck was true
And chivalrous: upon the clay
Each sate him down, all sad and mute,
Beside his monarch and his steed,
For danger levels man and brute,
And all are fellows in their need.
Among the rest, Mazeppa made
His pillow in an old oak's shade—
Himself as rough, and scarce less old,
The Ukraine's hetman, calm and bold;

But first, outspent with this long course,
The Cossack prince rubb'd down his horse,
And made for him a leafy bed,
And smooth'd his fetlocks and his mane,
And slack'd his girth, and stripp'd his rein,
And joy'd to see how well he fed;
For until now he had the dread
His wearied courser might refuse
To browze beneath the midnight dews:
But he was hardy as his lord,
And little cared for bed and board;
But spirited and docile too;
Whate'er was to be done, would do.
Shaggy and swift, and strong of limb,
All Tartar-like he carried him;
Obey'd his voice, and came at call,
And knew him in the midst of all:
Though thousands were around,—and Night,
Without a star, pursued her flight,—
That steed from sunset until dawn
His chief would follow like a fawn.

IV.

This done, Mazeppa spread his cloak,
And laid his lance beneath his oak,
Felt if his arms in order good
The long day's march had well withstood—
If still the powder fill'd the pan,
And flints unloosen'd kept their lock—
His sabre's hilt and scabbard felt,
And whether they had chafed his belt—
And next the venerable man,
From out his haversack and can,
Prepared and spread his slender stock;
And to the monarch and his men
The whole or portion offer'd then
With far less of inquietude
Than courtiers at a banquet would.
And Charles of this his slender share
With smiles partook a moment there,
To force of cheer a greater show,
And seem above both wounds and woe;—
And then he said—"Of all our band,
"Though firm of heart and strong of hand,

" In skirmish, march, or forage, none
" Can less have said or more have done
" Than thee, Mazeppa! On the earth
" So fit a pair had never birth,
" Since Alexander's days till now,
" As thy Bucephalus and thou:
" All Scythia's fame to thine should yield
" For pricking on o'er flood and field."
Mazeppa answer'd—"Ill betide
" The school wherein I learn'd to ride!"
Quoth Charles—" Old Hetman, wherefore so,
" Since thou hast learn'd the art so well?"
Mazeppa said—" 'Twere long to tell;
" And we have many a league to go
" With every now and then a blow,
" And ten to one at least the foe,
" Before our steeds may graze at ease
" Beyond the swift Borysthenes:
" And, sire, your limbs have need of rest,
" And I will be the sentinel
" Of this your troop."—" But I request,"
Said Sweden's monarch, " thou wilt tell

" This tale of thine, and I may reap,
" Perchance, from this the boon of sleep,
" For at this moment from my eyes
" The hope of present slumber flies."

" Well, sire, with such a hope, I'll track
" My seventy years of memory back:
" I think 'twas in my twentieth spring,—
" Ay, 'twas,—when Casimir was king—
" John Casimir,—I was his page
" Six summers in my earlier age;
" A learned monarch, faith! was he,
" And most unlike your majesty:
" He made no wars, and did not gain
" New realms to lose them back again;
" And (save debates in Warsaw's diet)
" He reign'd in most unseemly quiet;
" Not that he had no cares to vex,
" He loved the muses and the sex;
" And sometimes these so froward are,
" They made him wish himself at war;
" But soon his wrath being o'er, he took
" Another mistress, or new book:

" And then he gave prodigious fêtes—
" All Warsaw gather'd round his gates
" To gaze upon his splendid court,
" And dames, and chiefs, of princely port:
" He was the Polish Solomon,
" So sung his poets, all but one,
" Who, being unpension'd, made a satire,
" And boasted that he could not flatter.
" It was a court of jousts and mimes,
" Where every courtier tried at rhymes;
" Even I for once produced some verses,
" And sign'd my odes Despairing Thirsis.
" There was a certain Palatine,
" A count of far and high descent,
" Rich as a salt or silver mine;*
" And he was proud, ye may divine,
" As if from heaven he had been sent:
" He had such wealth in blood and ore
" As few could match beneath the throne;
" And he would gaze upon his store,
" And o'er his pedigree would pore,

* This comparison of a "*salt* mine" may perhaps be permitted to a Pole, as the wealth of the country consists greatly in the salt mines.

" Until by some confusion led,
" Which almost look'd like want of head,
" He thought their merits were his own.
" His wife was not of his opinion—
" His junior she by thirty years—
" Grew daily tired of his dominion;
" And, after wishes, hopes, and fears,
" To virtue a few farewell tears,
" A restless dream or two, some glances
" At Warsaw's youth, some songs, and dances,
" Awaited but the usual chances,
" Those happy accidents which render
" The coldest dames so very tender,
" To deck her Count with titles given,
" 'Tis said, as passports into heaven;
" But, strange to say, they rarely boast
" Of these who have deserved them most.

V.

" I was a goodly stripling then;
" At seventy years I so may say,
" That there were few, or boys or men,
" Who, in my dawning time of day,

" Of vassal or of knight's degree,
" Could vie in vanities with me;
" For I had strength, youth, gaiety,
" A port, not like to this ye see,
" But smooth, as all is rugged now;
" For time, and care, and war, have plough'd
" My very soul from out my brow;
" And thus I should be disavow'd
" By all my kind and kin, could they
" Compare my day and yesterday;
" This change was wrought, too, long ere age
" Had ta'en my features for his page:
" With years, ye know, have not declined
" My strength, my courage, or my mind,
" Or at this hour I should not be
" Telling old tales beneath a tree,
" With starless skies my canopy.
" But let me on: Theresa's form—
" Methinks it glides before me now,
" Between me and yon chestnut's bough,
" The memory is so quick and warm;
" And yet I find no words to tell
" The shape of her I loved so well:

" She had the Asiatic eye,
" Such as our Turkish neighbourhood
" Hath mingled with our Polish blood,
" Dark as above us is the sky;
" But through it stole a tender light,
" Like the first moonrise at midnight;
" Large, dark, and swimming in the stream,
" Which seem'd to melt to its own beam;
" All love, half languor, and half fire,
" Like saints that at the stake expire,
" And lift their raptured looks on high,
" As though it were a joy to die.
" A brow like a midsummer lake,
" Transparent with the sun therein,
" When waves no murmur dare to make,
" And heaven beholds her face within.
" A cheek and lip—but why proceed?
" I loved her then—I love her still;
" And such as I am, love indeed
" In fierce extremes—in good and ill.
" But still we love even in our rage,
" And haunted to our very age

" With the vain shadow of the past,
" As is Mazeppa to the last.

VI.

" We met—we gazed—I saw, and sigh'd,
" She did not speak, and yet replied;
" There are ten thousand tones and signs
" We hear and see, but none defines—
" Involuntary sparks of thought,
" Which strike from out the heart o'erwrought,
" And form a strange intelligence,
" Alike mysterious and intense,
" Which link the burning chain that binds,
" Without their will, young hearts and minds;
" Conveying, as the electric wire,
" We know not how, the absorbing fire.—
" I saw, and sigh'd—in silence wept,
" And still reluctant distance kept,
" Until I was made known to her,
" And we might then and there confer
" Without suspicion—then, even then,
" I long'd, and was resolved to speak;

" But on my lips they died again,
" The accents tremulous and weak,
" Until one hour.—There is a game,
" A frivolous and foolish play,
" Wherewith we while away the day;
" It is—I have forgot the name—
" And we to this, it seems, were set,
" By some strange chance, which I forget:
" I reck'd not if I won or lost,
" It was enough for me to be
" So near to hear, and oh! to see
" The being whom I loved the most.—
" I watch'd her as a sentinel,
" (May ours this dark night watch as well!)
" Until I saw, and thus it was,
" That she was pensive, nor perceived
" Her occupation, nor was grieved
" Nor glad to lose or gain; but still
" Play'd on for hours, as if her will
" Yet bound her to the place, though not
" That hers might be the winning lot.

" Then through my brain the thought did pass
" Even as a flash of lightning there,
" That there was something in her air
" Which would not doom me to despair;
" And on the thought my words broke forth,
" All incoherent as they were—
" Their eloquence was little worth,
" But yet she listen'd—'tis enough—
" Who listens once will listen twice;
" Her heart, be sure, is not of ice,
" And one refusal no rebuff.

VII.

" I loved, and was beloved again—
" They tell me, Sire, you never knew
" Those gentle frailties; if 'tis true,
" I shorten all my joy or pain;
" To you 'twould seem absurd as vain;
" But all men are not born to reign,
" Or o'er their passions, or as you
" Thus o'er themselves and nations too.

" I am—or rather *was*—a prince,
" A chief of thousands, and could lead
" Them on where each would foremost bleed;
" But could not o'er myself evince
" The like control—But to resume:
" I loved, and was beloved again;
" In sooth, it is a happy doom,
" But yet where happiest ends in pain.—
" We met in secret, and the hour
" Which led me to that lady's bower
" Was fiery Expectation's dower.
" My days and nights were nothing—all
" Except that hour, which doth recal
" In the long lapse from youth to age
" No other like itself—I'd give
" The Ukraine back again to live
" It o'er once more—and be a page,
" The happy page, who was the lord
" Of one soft heart, and his own sword,
" And had no other gem nor wealth
" Save nature's gift of youth and health.—

" We met in secret—doubly sweet,
" Some say, they find it so to meet;
" I know not that—I would have given
" My life but to have call'd her mine
" In the full view of earth and heaven;
" For I did oft and long repine
" That we could only meet by stealth.

VIII.

" For lovers there are many eyes,
" And such there were on us;—the devil
" On such occasions should be civil—
" The devil!—I'm loth to do him wrong,
" It might be some untoward saint,
" Who would not be at rest too long,
" But to his pious bile gave vent—
" But one fair night, some lurking spies
" Surprised and seized us both.
" The Count was something more than wroth—
" I was unarm'd; but if in steel,
" All cap-à-pie from head to heel,
" What 'gainst their numbers could I do?—

" 'Twas near his castle, far away
" From city or from succour near,
" And almost on the break of day;
" I did not think to see another,
" My moments seem'd reduced to few;
" And with one prayer to Mary Mother,
" And, it may be, a saint or two,
" As I resign'd me to my fate,
" They led me to the castle gate:
" Theresa's doom I never knew,
" Our lot was henceforth separate.—
" An angry man, ye may opine,
" Was he, the proud Count Palatine;
" And he had reason good to be,
" But he was most enraged lest such
" An accident should chance to touch
" Upon his future pedigree;
" Nor less amazed, that such a blot
" His noble 'scutcheon should have got,
" While he was highest of his line;
" Because unto himself he seem'd
" The first of men, nor less he deem'd
" In others' eyes, and most in mine.

" 'S death! with a *page*—perchance a king
" Had reconciled him to the thing;
" But with a stripling of a page—
" I felt—but cannot paint his rage.

IX.

" 'Bring forth the horse!'—the horse was brought;
" In truth, he was a noble steed,
" A Tartar of the Ukraine breed,
" Who look'd as though the speed of thought
" Were in his limbs; but he was wild,
" Wild as the wild deer, and untaught,
" With spur and bridle undefiled—
" 'Twas but a day he had been caught;
" And snorting, with erected mane,
" And struggling fiercely, but in vain,
" In the full foam of wrath and dread
" To me the desert-born was led:
" They bound me on, that menial throng,
" Upon his back with many a thong;
" Then loosed him with a sudden lash—
" Away!—away!—and on we dash!—
" Torrents less rapid and less rash.

X.

" Away !—away !—My breath was gone—
" I saw not where he hurried on:
" 'Twas scarcely yet the break of day,
" And on he foam'd—away !—away !—
" The last of human sounds which rose,
" As I was darted from my foes,
" Was the wild shout of savage laughter,
" Which on the wind came roaring after
" A moment from that rabble rout:
" With sudden wrath I wrench'd my head,
" And snapp'd the cord, which to the mane
" Had bound my neck in lieu of rein,
" And, writhing half my form about,
" Howl'd back my curse; but 'midst the tread,
" The thunder of my courser's speed,
" Perchance they did not hear nor heed:
" It vexes me—for I would fain
" Have paid their insult back again.
" I paid it well in after days:
" There is not of that castle gate,
" Its drawbridge and portcullis' weight,
" Stone, bar, moat, bridge, or barrier left;

" Nor of its fields a blade of grass,
" Save what grows on a ridge of wall,
" Where stood the hearth-stone of the hall;
" And many a time ye there might pass,
" Nor dream that e'er that fortress was:
" I saw its turrets in a blaze,
" Their crackling battlements all cleft,
" And the hot lead pour down like rain
" From off the scorch'd and blackening roof,
" Whose thickness was not vengeance-proof.
" They little thought that day of pain,
" When lanch'd, as on the lightning's flash,
" They bade me to destruction dash,
" That one day I should come again,
" With twice five thousand horse, to thank
" The Count for his uncourteous ride.
" They play'd me then a bitter prank,
" When, with the wild horse for my guide,
" They bound me to his foaming flank:
" At length I play'd them one as frank—
" For time at last sets all things even—
" And if we do but watch the hour,
" There never yet was human power
" Which could evade, if unforgiven,

" The patient search and vigil long
" Of him who treasures up a wrong.

XI.

" Away, away, my steed and I,
" Upon the pinions of the wind,
" All human dwellings left behind;
" We sped like meteors through the sky,
" When with its crackling sound the night
" Is chequer'd with the northern light:
" Town—village—none were on our track,
" But a wild plain of far extent,
" And bounded by a forest black;
" And, save the scarce seen battlement
" On distant heights of some strong hold,
" Against the Tartars built of old,
" No trace of man. The year before
" A Turkish army had march'd o'er;
" And where the Spahi's hoof hath trod,
" The verdure flies the bloody sod:—
" The sky was dull, and dim, and gray,
" And a low breeze crept moaning by—
" I could have answer'd with a sigh—

"But fast we fled, away, away—
"And I could neither sigh nor pray;
"And my cold sweat-drops fell like rain
"Upon the courser's bristling mane;
"But, snorting still with rage and fear,
"He flew upon his far career:
"At times I almost thought, indeed,
"He must have slacken'd in his speed;
"But no—my bound and slender frame
"Was nothing to his angry might,
"And merely like a spur became:
"Each motion which I made to free
"My swoln limbs from their agony
"Increased his fury and affright:
"I tried my voice,—'twas faint and low,
"But yet he swerved as from a blow;
"And, starting to each accent, sprang
"As from a sudden trumpet's clang:
"Meantime my cords were wet with gore,
"Which, oozing through my limbs, ran o'er;
"And in my tongue the thirst became
"A something fierier far than flame.

XII.

" We near'd the wild wood—'twas so wide,
" I saw no bounds on either side;
" 'Twas studded with old sturdy trees,
" That bent not to the roughest breeze
" Which howls down from Siberia's waste,
" And strips the forest in its haste,—
" But these were few, and far between
" Set thick with shrubs more young and green,
" Luxuriant with their annual leaves,
" Ere strown by those autumnal eves
" That nip the forest's foliage dead,
" Discolour'd with a lifeless red,
" Which stands thereon like stiffen'd gore
" Upon the slain when battle's o'er,
" And some long winter's night hath shed
" Its frost o'er every tombless head,
" So cold and stark the raven's beak
" May peck unpierced each frozen cheek:
" 'Twas a wild waste of underwood,
" And here and there a chestnut stood,

" The strong oak, and the hardy pine;
" But far apart—and well it were,
" Or else a different lot were mine—
" The boughs gave way, and did not tear
" My limbs; and I found strength to bear
" My wounds, already scarr'd with cold—
" My bonds forbade to loose my hold.
" We rustled through the leaves like wind,
" Left shrubs, and trees, and wolves behind;
" By night I heard them on the track,
" Their troop came hard upon our back,
" With their long gallop, which can tire
" The hound's deep hate, and hunter's fire:
" Where'er we flew they follow'd on,
" Nor left us with the morning sun;
" Behind I saw them, scarce a rood,
" At day-break winding through the wood,
" And through the night had heard their feet
" Their stealing, rustling step repeat.
" Oh! how I wish'd for spear or sword,
" At least to die amidst the horde,

" And perish—if it must be so—
" At bay, destroying many a foe.
" When first my courser's race begun,
" I wish'd the goal already won;
" But now I doubted strength and speed.
" Vain doubt! his swift and savage breed
" Had nerved him like the mountain-roe;
" Nor faster falls the blinding snow
" Which whelms the peasant near the door
" Whose threshold he shall cross no more,
" Bewilder'd with the dazzling blast,
" Than through the forest-paths he past—
" Untired, untamed, and worse than wild;
" All furious as a favour'd child
" Balk'd of its wish; or fiercer still—
" A woman piqued—who has her will.

XIII.

" The wood was past; 'twas more than noon,
" But chill the air, although in June;
" Or it might be my veins ran cold—
" Prolong'd endurance tames the bold;

" And I was then not what I seem,
" But headlong as a wintry stream,
" And wore my feelings out before
" I well could count their causes o'er:
" And what with fury, fear, and wrath,
" The tortures which beset my path,
" Cold, hunger, sorrow, shame, distress,
" Thus bound in nature's nakedness;
" Sprung from a race whose rising blood
" When stirr'd beyond its calmer mood,
" And trodden hard upon, is like
" The rattle-snake's, in act to strike,
" What marvel if this worn-out trunk
" Beneath its woes a moment sunk?
" The earth gave way, the skies roll'd round,
" I seem'd to sink upon the ground;
" But err'd, for I was fastly bound.
" My heart turn'd sick, my brain grew sore,
" And throbb'd awhile, then beat no more:
" The skies spun like a mighty wheel;
" I saw the trees like drunkards reel,

" And a slight flash sprang o'er my eyes,
" Which saw no farther: he who dies
" Can die no more than then I died.
" O'ertortured by that ghastly ride,
" I felt the blackness come and go,
" And strove to wake; but could not make
" My senses climb up from below:
" I felt as on a plank at sea,
" When all the waves that dash o'er thee,
" At the same time upheave and whelm,
" And hurl thee towards a desert realm.
" My undulating life was as
" The fancied lights that flitting pass
" Our shut eyes in deep midnight, when
" Fever begins upon the brain;
" But soon it pass'd, with little pain,
" But a confusion worse than such:
" I own that I should deem it much,
" Dying, to feel the same again;
" And yet I do suppose we must
" Feel far more ere we turn to dust:

" No matter; I have bared my brow
" Full in Death's face—before—and now.

XIV.

" My thoughts came back; where was I? Cold,
" And numb, and giddy: pulse by pulse
" Life reassumed its lingering hold,
" And throb by throb; till grown a pang
" Which for a moment would convulse,
" My blood reflow'd, though thick and chill;
" My ear with uncouth noises rang,
" My heart began once more to thrill;
" My sight return'd, though dim; alas!
" And thicken'd, as it were, with glass.
" Methought the dash of waves was nigh;
" There was a gleam too of the sky,
" Studded with stars;—it is no dream;
" The wild horse swims the wilder stream!
" The bright broad river's gushing tide
" Sweeps, winding onward, far and wide,
" And we are half-way, struggling o'er
" To yon unknown and silent shore.

" The waters broke my hollow trance,
" And with a temporary strength
" My stiffen'd limbs were rebaptized.
" My courser's broad breast proudly braves,
" And dashes off the ascending waves
" And onward we advance!
" We reach the slippery shore at length,
" A haven I but little prized,
" For all behind was dark and drear,
" And all before was night and fear.
" How many hours of night or day
" In those suspended pangs I lay,
" I could not tell; I scarcely knew
" If this were human breath I drew.

XV.

" With glossy skin, and dripping mane,
" And reeling limbs, and reeking flank,
" The wild steed's sinewy nerves still strain
" Up the repelling bank.
" We gain the top: a boundless plain
" Spreads through the shadow of the night,

" And onward, onward, onward, seems
" Like precipices in our dreams,
" To stretch beyond the sight;
" And here and there a speck of white,
" Or scatter'd spot of dusky green,
" In masses broke into the light,
" As rose the moon upon my right.
" But nought distinctly seen
" In the dim waste, would indicate
" The omen of a cottage gate;
" No twinkling taper from afar
" Stood like an hospitable star;
" Not even an ignis-fatuus rose
" To make him merry with my woes:
" That very cheat had cheer'd me then!
" Although detected, welcome still,
" Reminding me, through every ill,
" Of the abodes of men.

XVI.

" Onward we went—but slack and slow;
" His savage force at length o'erspent,

" The drooping courser, faint and low,
" All feebly foaming went.
" A sickly infant had had power
" To guide him forward in that hour;
" But useless all to me.
" His new-born tameness nought avail'd,
" My limbs were bound; my force had fail'd,
" Perchance, had they been free.
" With feeble effort still I tried
" To rend the bonds so starkly tied—
" But still it was in vain;
" My limbs were only wrung the more,
" And soon the idle strife gave o'er,
" Which but prolong'd their pain:
" The dizzy race seem'd almost done,
" Although no goal was nearly won:
" Some streaks announced the coming sun—
" How slow, alas! he came!
" Methought that mist of dawning gray
" Would never dapple into day;
" How heavily it roll'd away—
" Before the eastern flame

" Rose crimson, and deposed the stars,
" And call'd the radiance from their cars,
" And fill'd the earth, from his deep throne,
" With lonely lustre, all his own.

XVII.

" Up rose the sun; the mists were curl'd
" Back from the solitary world
" Which lay around—behind—before:
" What booted it to traverse o'er
" Plain, forest, river? Man nor brute,
" Nor dint of hoof, nor print of foot,
" Lay in the wild luxuriant soil;
" No sign of travel—none of toil;
" The very air was mute;
" And not an insect's shrill small horn,
" Nor matin bird's new voice was borne
" From herb nor thicket. Many a werst,
" Panting as if his heart would burst,
" The weary brute still stagger'd on;
" And still we were—or seem'd—alone:

" At length, while reeling on our way,
" Methought I heard a courser neigh,
" From out yon tuft of blackening firs.
" Is it the wind those branches stirs?
" No, no! from out the forest prance
" A trampling troop; I see them come!
" In one vast squadron they advance!
" I strove to cry—my lips were dumb.
" The steeds rush on in plunging pride;
" But where are they the reins to guide?
" A thousand horse—and none to ride!
" With flowing tail, and flying mane,
" Wide nostrils—never stretch'd by pain,
" Mouths bloodless to the bit or rein,
" And feet that iron never shod,
" And flanks unscarr'd by spur or rod.
" A thousand horse, the wild, the free,
" Like waves that follow o'er the sea,
" Came thickly thundering on,
" As if our faint approach to meet;
" The sight re-nerved my courser's feet,
" A moment staggering, feebly fleet,

" A moment, with a faint low neigh,
" He answer'd, and then fell;
" With gasps and glazing eyes he lay,
" And reeking limbs immoveable,
" His first and last career is done!
" On came the troop—they saw him stoop,
" They saw me strangely bound along
" His back with many a bloody thong:
" They stop—they start—they snuff the air,
" Gallop a moment here and there,
" Approach, retire, wheel round and round,
" Then plunging back with sudden bound,
" Headed by one black mighty steed,
" Who seem'd the patriarch of his breed,
" Without a single speck or hair
" Of white upon his shaggy hide;
" They snort—they foam—neigh—swerve aside,
" And backward to the forest fly,
" By instinct, from a human eye.—
" They left me there, to my despair,
" Link'd to the dead and stiffening wretch,
" Whose lifeless limbs beneath me stretch,

" Relieved from that unwonted weight,
" From whence I could not extricate
" Nor him nor me—and there we lay,
" The dying on the dead!
" I little deem'd another day
" Would see my houseless, helpless head.

" And there from morn till twilight bound,
" I felt the heavy hours toil round,
" With just enough of life to see
" My last of suns go down on me,
" In hopeless certainty of mind,
" That makes us feel at length resign'd
" To that which our foreboding years
" Presents the worst and last of fears
" Inevitable—even a boon,
" Nor more unkind for coming soon;
" Yet shunn'd and dreaded with such care,
" As if it only were a snare
" That prudence might escape:
" At times both wish'd for and implored,
" At times sought with self-pointed sword,

" Yet still a dark and hideous close
" To even intolerable woes,
" And welcome in no shape.
" And, strange to say, the sons of pleasure,
" They who have revell'd beyond measure
" In beauty, wassail, wine, and treasure,
" Die calm, or calmer, oft than he
" Whose heritage was misery:
" For he who hath in turn run through
" All that was beautiful and new,
" Hath nought to hope, and nought to leave;
" And, save the future, (which is view'd
" Not quite as men are base or good,
" But as their nerves may be endued),
" With nought perhaps to grieve:—
" The wretch still hopes his woes must end,
" And Death, whom he should deem his friend,
" Appears, to his distemper'd eyes,
" Arrived to rob him of his prize,
" The tree of his new Paradise.
" To-morrow would have given him all,
" Repaid his pangs, repair'd his fall;

" To-morrow would have been the first
" Of days no more deplored or curst,
" But bright, and long, and beckoning years,
" Seen dazzling through the mist of tears,
" Guerdon of many a painful hour;
" To-morrow would have given him power
" To rule, to shine, to smite, to save—
" And must it dawn upon his grave?

XVIII.

" The sun was sinking—still I lay
" Chain'd to the chill and stiffening steed,
" I thought to mingle there our clay;
" And my dim eyes of death had need,
" No hope arose of being freed:
" I cast my last looks up the sky,
" And there between me and the sun
" I saw the expecting raven fly,
" Who scarce would wait till both should die,
" Ere his repast begun;
" He flew, and perch'd, then flew once more,
" And each time nearer than before;

" I saw his wing through twilight flit,
" And once so near me he alit
" I could have smote, but lack'd the strength;
" But the slight motion of my hand,
" And feeble scratching of the sand,
" The exerted throat's faint struggling noise,
" Which scarcely could be call'd a voice,
" Together scared him off at length.—
" I know no more—my latest dream
" Is something of a lovely star
" Which fix'd my dull eyes from afar,
" And went and came with wandering beam,
" And of the cold, dull, swimming, dense
" Sensation of recurring sense,
" And then subsiding back to death,
" And then again a little breath,
" A little thrill, a short suspense,
" An icy sickness curdling o'er
" My heart, and sparks that cross'd my brain—
" A gasp, a throb, a start of pain,
" A sigh, and nothing more.

XIX.

"I woke—Where was I?—Do I see
"A human face look down on me?
"And doth a roof above me close?
"Do these limbs on a couch repose?
"Is this a chamber where I lie?
"And is it mortal yon bright eye,
"That watches me with gentle glance?
"I closed my own again once more,
"As doubtful that the former trance
"Could not as yet be o'er.
"A slender girl, long-hair'd, and tall,
"Sate watching by the cottage wall;
"The sparkle of her eye I caught,
"Even with my first return of thought;
"For ever and anon she threw
"A prying, pitying glance on me
"With her black eyes so wild and free:
"I gazed, and gazed, until I knew
"No vision it could be,—
"But that I lived, and was released
"From adding to the vulture's feast:

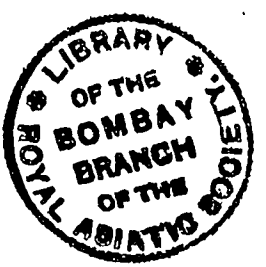
"And when the Cossack maid beheld
"My heavy eyes at length unseal'd,
"She smiled—and I essay'd to speak,
"But fail'd—and she approach'd, and made
"With lip and finger signs that said,
"I must not strive as yet to break
"The silence, till my strength should be
"Enough to leave my accents free;
"And then her hand on mine she laid,
"And smooth'd the pillow for my head,
"And stole along on tiptoe tread,
"And gently oped the door, and spake
"In whispers—ne'er was voice so sweet!
"Even music follow'd her light feet;—
"But those she call'd were not awake,
"And she went forth; but, ere she pass'd,
"Another look on me she cast,
"Another sign she made, to say,
"That I had nought to fear, that all
"Were near, at my command or call,
"And she would not delay
"Her due return:—while she was gone,
"Methought I felt too much alone.

XX.

" She came with mother and with sire—
" What need of more?—I will not tire
" With long recital of the rest,
" Since I became the Cossacks' guest:
" They found me senseless on the plain—
" They bore me to the nearest hut—
" They brought me into life again—
" Me—one day o'er their realm to reign!
" Thus the vain fool who strove to glut
" His rage, refining on my pain,
" Sent me forth to the wilderness,
" Bound, naked, bleeding, and alone,
" To pass the desert to a throne,—
" What mortal his own doom may guess?—
" Let none despond, let none despair!
" To-morrow the Borysthenes
" May see our coursers graze at ease
" Upon his Turkish bank,—and never
" Had I such welcome for a river
" As I shall yield when safely there.

" Comrades, good night!"—The Hetman threw
His length beneath the oak-tree shade,
With leafy couch already made,
A bed nor comfortless nor new
To him, who took his rest whene'er
The hour arrived, no matter where:—
His eyes the hastening slumbers steep.
And if ye marvel Charles forgot
To thank his tale, *he* wonder'd not,—
The king had been an hour asleep.

ODE.



O D E.

I.

OH Venice! Venice! when thy marble walls
Are level with the waters, there shall be
A cry of nations o'er thy sunken halls,
A loud lament along the sweeping sea!
If I, a northern wanderer, weep for thee,
What should thy sons do?—any thing but weep:
And yet they only murmur in their sleep.
In contrast with their fathers—as the slime,
The dull green ooze of the receding deep,
Is with the dashing of the spring-tide foam,
That drives the sailor shipless to his home,
Are they to those that were; and thus they creep,
Crouching and crab-like, through their sapping streets.
Oh! agony—that centuries should reap

No mellower harvest! Thirteen hundred years
Of wealth and glory turn'd to dust and tears;
And every monument the stranger meets,
Church, palace, pillar, as a mourner greets;
And even the Lion all subdued appears,
And the harsh sound of the barbarian drum,
With dull and daily dissonance, repeats
The echo of thy tyrant's voice along
The soft waves, once all musical to song,
That heaved beneath the moonlight with the throng
Of gondolas—and to the busy hum
Of cheerful creatures, whose most sinful deeds
Were but the overbeating of the heart,
And flow of too much happiness, which needs
The aid of age to turn its course apart
From the luxuriant and voluptuous flood
Of sweet sensations, battling with the blood.
But these are better than the gloomy errors,
The weeds of nations in their last decay,
When Vice walks forth with her unsoften'd terrors,
And Mirth is madness, and but smiles to slay;
And Hope is nothing but a false delay,

The sick man's lightning half an hour ere death,
When Faintness, the last mortal birth of Pain,
And apathy of limb, the dull beginning
Of the cold staggering race which Death is winning,
Steals vein by vein and pulse by pulse away;
Yet so relieving the o'er-tortured clay,
To him appears renewal of his breath,
And freedom the mere numbness of his chain;—
And then he talks of life, and how again
He feels his spirits soaring—albeit weak,
And of the fresher air, which he would seek;
And as he whispers knows not that he gasps,
That his thin finger feels not what it clasps,
And so the film comes o'er him—and the dizzy
Chamber swims round and round—and shadows busy,
At which he vainly catches, flit and gleam,
Till the last rattle chokes the strangled scream,
And all is ice and blackness,—and the earth
That which it was the moment ere our birth.

II.

There is no hope for nations!—Search the page
Of many thousand years—the daily scene,

The flow and ebb of each recurring age,
The everlasting *to be* which *hath been*,
Hath taught us nought or little: still we lean
On things that rot beneath our weight, and wear
Our strength away in wrestling with the air;
For 'tis our nature strikes us down: the beasts
Slaughter'd in hourly hecatombs for feasts
Are of as high an order—they must go
Even where their driver goads them, though to slaughter.
Ye men, who pour your blood for kings as water,
What have they given your children in return?
A heritage of servitude and woes,
A blindfold bondage, where your hire is blows.
What! do not yet the red-hot ploughshares burn,
O'er which you stumble in a false ordeal,
And deem this proof of loyalty the *real*;
Kissing the hand that guides you to your scars,
And glorying as you tread the glowing bars?
All that your sires have left you, all that Time
Bequeaths of free, and History of sublime,
Spring from a different theme!—Ye see and read,
Admire and sigh, and then succumb and bleed!

Save the few spirits, who, despite of all,
And worse than all, the sudden crimes engender'd
By the down-thundering of the prison-wall,
And thirst to swallow the sweet waters tender'd,
Gushing from Freedom's fountains—when the crowd,
Madden'd with centuries of drought, are loud,
And trample on each other to obtain
The cup which brings oblivion of a chain
Heavy and sore,—in which long yoked they plough'd
The sand,—or if there sprung the yellow grain,
'Twas not for them, their necks were too much bow'd,
And their dead palates chew'd the cud of pain:—
Yes! the few spirits—who, despite of deeds
Which they abhor, confound not with the cause
Those momentary starts from Nature's laws,
Which, like the pestilence and earthquake, smite
But for a term, then pass, and leave the earth
With all her seasons to repair the blight
With a few summers, and again put forth
Cities and generations—fair, when free—
For, Tyranny, there blooms no bud for thee!

III.

Glory and Empire! once upon these towers
With Freedom—godlike Triad! how ye sate!
The league of mightiest nations, in those hours
When Venice was an envy, might abate,
But did not quench, her spirit—in her fate
All were enwrapp'd: the feasted monarchs knew
And loved their hostess, nor could learn to hate,
Although they humbled—with the kingly few
The many felt, for from all days and climes
She was the voyager's worship;—even her crimes
Were of the softer order—born of Love,
She drank no blood, nor fatten'd on the dead,
But gladden'd where her harmless conquests spread;
For these restored the Cross, that from above
Hallow'd her sheltering banners, which incessant
Flew between earth and the unholy Crescent,
Which, if it waned and dwindled, Earth may thank
The city it has clothed in chains, which clank
Now, creaking in the ears of those who owe
The name of Freedom to her glorious struggles;
Yet she but shares with them a common woe,

And call'd the "kingdom" of a conquering foe,—
But knows what all—and, most of all, *we* know—
With what set gilded terms a tyrant juggles!

IV.

The name of Commonwealth is past and gone
O'er the three fractions of the groaning globe;
Venice is crush'd, and Holland deigns to own
A sceptre, and endures the purple robe;
If the free Switzer yet bestrides alone
His chainless mountains, 'tis but for a time,
For tyranny of late is cunning grown,
And in its own good season tramples down
The sparkles of our ashes. One great clime,
Whose vigorous offspring by dividing ocean
Are kept apart and nursed in the devotion
Of Freedom, which their fathers fought for, and
Bequeath'd—a heritage of heart and hand,
And proud distinction from each other land,
Whose sons must bow them at a monarch's motion,
As if his senseless sceptre were a wand
Full of the magic of exploded science—
Still one great clime, in full and free defiance,

Yet rears her crest, unconquer'd and sublime,
Above the far Atlantic!—She has taught
Her Esau-brethren that the haughty flag,
The floating fence of Albion's feebler crag,
May strike to those whose red right hands have bought
Rights cheaply earn'd with blood. Still, still, for ever
Better, though each man's life-blood were a river,
That it should flow, and overflow, than creep
Through thousand lazy channels in our veins,
Damm'd like the dull canal with locks and chains,
And moving, as a sick man in his sleep,
Three paces, and then faltering:—better be
Where the extinguish'd Spartans still are free,
In their proud charnel of Thermopylæ,
Than stagnate in our marsh,—or o'er the deep
Fly, and one current to the ocean add,
One spirit to the souls our fathers had,
One freeman more, America, to thee!

A FRAGMENT.

A FRAGMENT.

June 17, 1816.

IN the year 17—, having for some time determined on a journey through countries not hitherto much frequented by travellers, I set out, accompanied by a friend, whom I shall designate by the name of Augustus Darvell. He was a few years my elder, and a man of considerable fortune and ancient family—advantages which an extensive capacity prevented him alike from undervaluing or overrating. Some peculiar circumstances in his private history had rendered him to me an object of attention, of interest, and even of regard, which neither the reserve of his manners, nor occasional indications of an inquietude at times nearly approaching to alienation of mind, could extinguish.

I was yet young in life, which I had begun early; but my intimacy with him was of a recent date: we had been educated at the same schools and university; but his progress through these had preceded mine, and he had been deeply initiated into what is called the world, while I was yet in my noviciate. While thus engaged, I had heard much both of his past and present life; and although in these accounts there were many and irreconcileable contradictions, I could still gather from the whole that he was a being of no common order, and one who, whatever pains he might take to avoid remark, would still be remarkable. I had cultivated his acquaintance subsequently, and endeavoured to obtain his friendship, but this last appeared to be unattainable; whatever affections he might have possessed seemed now, some to have been extinguished, and others to be concentred: that his feelings were acute, I had sufficient opportunities of observing; for, although he could control, he could not altogether disguise them: still he had a power of giving to one passion the appearance of another in such a manner that it was difficult to define the nature of what was

working within him; and the expressions of his features would vary so rapidly, though slightly, that it was useless to trace them to their sources. It was evident that he was a prey to some cureless disquiet; but whether it arose from ambition, love, remorse, grief, from one or all of these, or merely from a morbid temperament akin to disease, I could not discover: there were circumstances alleged, which might have justified the application to each of these causes; but, as I have before said, these were so contradictory and contradicted, that none could be fixed upon with accuracy. Where there is mystery, it is generally supposed that there must also be evil: I know not how this may be, but in him there certainly was the one, though I could not ascertain the extent of the other —and felt loth, as far as regarded himself, to believe in its existence. My advances were received with sufficient coldness; but I was young, and not easily discouraged, and at length succeeded in obtaining, to a certain degree, that common-place intercourse and moderate confidence of common and every day concerns, created and cemented by similarity of pursuit and frequency of meeting, which is called intimacy, or friend-

ship, according to the ideas of him who uses those words to express them.

Darvell had already travelled extensively; and to him I had applied for information with regard to the conduct of my intended journey. It was my secret wish that he might be prevailed on to accompany me: it was also a probable hope, founded upon the shadowy restlessness which I had observed in him, and to which the animation which he appeared to feel on such subjects, and his apparent indifference to all by which he was more immediately surrounded, gave fresh strength. This wish I first hinted, and then expressed: his answer, though I had partly expected it, gave me all the pleasure of surprise—he consented; and, after the requisite arrangements, we commenced our voyages. After journeying through various countries of the south of Europe, our attention was turned towards the East, according to our original destination; and it was in my progress through those regions that the incident occurred upon which will turn what I may have to relate.

The constitution of Darvell, which must from his

appearance have been in early life more than usually robust, had been for some time gradually giving way, without the intervention of any apparent disease: he had neither cough nor hectic, yet he became daily more enfeebled: his habits were temperate, and he neither declined nor complained of fatigue; yet he was evidently wasting away: he became more and more silent and sleepless, and at length so seriously altered, that my alarm grew proportionate to what I conceived to be his danger.

We had determined, on our arrival at Smyrna, on an excursion to the ruins of Ephesus and Sardis, from which I endeavoured to dissuade him in his present state of indisposition—but in vain: there appeared to be an oppression on his mind, and a solemnity in his manner, which ill corresponded with his eagerness to proceed on what I regarded as a mere party of pleasure, little suited to a valetudinarian; but I opposed him no longer—and in a few days we set off together, accompanied only by a serrugee and a single janizary.

We had passed halfway towards the remains of Ephesus, leaving behind us the more fertile environs

of Smyrna, and were entering upon that wild and tenantless track through the marshes and defiles which lead to the few huts yet lingering over the broken columns of Diana — the roofless walls of expelled Christianity, and the still more recent but complete desolation of abandoned mosques—when the sudden and rapid illness of my companion obliged us to halt at a Turkish cemetery, the turbaned tombstones of which were the sole indication that human life had ever been a sojourner in this wilderness. The only caravansera we had seen was left some hours behind us, not a vestige of a town or even cottage was within sight or hope, and this "city of the dead" appeared to be the sole refuge for my unfortunate friend, who seemed on the verge of becoming the last of its inhabitants.

In this situation, I looked round for a place where he might most conveniently repose:—contrary to the usual aspect of Mahometan burial-grounds, the cypresses were in this few in number, and these thinly scattered over its extent: the tombstones were mostly fallen, and worn with age:—upon one of the most

considerable of these, and beneath one of the most spreading trees, Darvell supported himself, in a half-reclining posture, with great difficulty. He asked for water. I had some doubts of our being able to find any, and prepared to go in search of it with hesitating despondency—but he desired me to remain; and turning to Suleiman, our janizary, who stood by us smoking with great tranquillity, he said, "Suleiman, verbana "su," (i. e. bring some water,) and went on describing the spot where it was to be found with great minuteness, at a small well for camels, a few hundred yards to the right: the janizary obeyed. I said to Darvell, "How "did you know this?"—He replied, "From our situa-"tion; you must perceive that this place was once in-"habited, and could not have been so without springs: "I have also been here before."

"You have been here before!—How came you "never to mention this to me? and what could you "be doing in a place where no one would remain a "moment longer than they could help it?"

To this question I received no answer. In the mean time Suleiman returned with the water, leaving the serrugee and the horses at the fountain. The

quenching of his thirst had the appearance of reviving him for a moment; and I conceived hopes of his being able to proceed, or at least to return, and I urged the attempt. He was silent—and appeared to be collecting his spirits for an effort to speak. He began.

"This is the end of my journey, and of my life—I "came here to die: but I have a request to make, a "command—for such my last words must be—You "will observe it?"

"Most certainly; but have better hopes."

"I have no hopes, nor wishes, but this—conceal my "death from every human being."

"I hope there will be no occasion; that you will re- "cover, and ——"

"Peace!—it must be so: promise this."

"I do."

"Swear it, by all that"——He here dictated an oath of great solemnity.

"There is no occasion for this—I will observe your "request; and to doubt me is ——"

"It cannot be helped,—you must swear."

I took the oath: it appeared to relieve him. He

removed a seal ring from his finger, on which were some Arabic characters, and presented it to me. He proceeded—

"On the ninth day of the month, at noon precisely "(what month you please, but this must be the day), "you must fling this ring into the salt springs which "run into the Bay of Eleusis: the day after, at the "same hour, you must repair to the ruins of the tem- "ple of Ceres, and wait one hour."

"Why?"

"You will see."

"The ninth day of the month, you say?"

"The ninth."

As I observed that the present was the ninth day of the month, his countenance changed, and he paused. As he sate, evidently becoming more feeble, a stork, with a snake in her beak, perched upon a tombstone near us; and, without devouring her prey, appeared to be stedfastly regarding us. I know not what impelled me to drive it away, but the attempt was useless; she made a few circles in the air, and returned exactly to the same spot. Darvell pointed to it, and smiled:

he spoke—I know not whether to himself or to me—but the words were only, "'Tis well!"

"What is well? what do you mean?"

"No matter: you must bury me here this evening, "and exactly where that bird is now perched. You "know the rest of my injunctions."

He then proceeded to give me several directions as to the manner in which his death might be best concealed. After these were finished, he exclaimed, "You "perceive that bird?"

"Certainly."

"And the serpent writhing in her beak?"

"Doubtless: there is nothing uncommon in it; it is "her natural prey. But it is odd that she does not "devour it."

He smiled in a ghastly manner, and said, faintly, "It is not yet time!" As he spoke, the stork flew away. My eyes followed it for a moment, it could hardly be longer than ten might be counted. I felt Darvell's weight, as it were, increase upon my shoulder, and, turning to look upon his face, perceived that he was dead!

I was shocked with the sudden certainty which could not be mistaken—his countenance in a few minutes became nearly black. I should have attributed so rapid a change to poison, had I not been aware that he had no opportunity of receiving it unperceived. The day was declining, the body was rapidly altering, and nothing remained but to fulfil his request. With the aid of Suleiman's ataghan and my own sabre, we scooped a shallow grave upon the spot which Darvell had indicated: the earth easily gave way, having already received some Mahometan tenant. We dug as deeply as the time permitted us, and throwing the dry earth upon all that remained of the singular being so lately departed, we cut a few sods of greener turf from the less withered soil around us, and laid them upon his sepulchre.

Between astonishment and grief, I was tearless.

* * * * *

THE END.

THE

AGE OF BRONZE.

I.

The "good old times"—all times when old are good—
Are gone; the present might be if they would;
Great things have been, and are, and greater still
Want little of mere mortals but their will;
A wider space, a greener field is given
To those who play their "tricks before high heaven."
I know not if the angels weep, but men
Have wept enough—for what?—to weep again.

II.

All is exploded—be it good or bad.
Reader! remember when thou wert a lad,
Then Pitt was all; or, if not all, so much,
His very rival almost deemed him such.
We, we have seen the intellectual race

Of giants stand, like Titans, face to face—
Athos and Ida, with a dashing sea
Of eloquence between, which flowed all free,
As the deep billows of the Ægean roar
Betwixt the Hellenic and the Phrygian shore.
But where are they—the rivals?—a few feet
Of sullen earth divide each winding sheet.
How peaceful and how powerful is the grave
Which hushes all! a calm, unstormy wave
Which oversweeps the world. The theme is old
Of "Dust to dust;" but half its tale untold.
Time tempers not its terrors—still the worm
Winds its cold folds, the tomb preserves its form—
Varied above, but still alike below;
The urn may shine, the ashes will not glow.
Though Cleopatra's mummy cross the sea,
O'er which from empire she lured Anthony;
Though Alexander's urn a show be grown
On shores he wept to conquer, though unknown—
How vain, how worse than vain at length appear
The madman's wish, the Macedonian's tear.
He wept for worlds to conquer—half the earth
Knows not his name, or but his death and birth
And desolation; while his native Greece
Hath all of desolation, save its peace.
He "wept for worlds to conquer!" he who ne'er
Conceived the globe, he panted not to spare!

With even the busy Northern Isle unknown,
Which holds his urn, and never knew his throne.

III.

But where is he, the modern, mightier far,
Who, born no king, made monarchs draw his car;
The new Sesostris, whose unharnessed kings,
Freed from the bit, believe themselves with wings,
And spurn the dust o'er which they crawled of late,
Chained to the chariot of the chieftain's state?
Yes! where is he, the Champion and the Child
Of all that's great or little, wise or wild?
Whose game was empires and whose stakes were thrones?
Whose table, earth—whose dice were human bones?
Behold the grand result in yon lone isle,
And, as thy nature urges, weep or smile.
Sigh to behold the eagle's lofty rage
Reduced to nibble at his narrow cage;
Smile to survey the Queller of the Nations
Now daily squabbling o'er disputed rations;
Weep to perceive him mourning, as he dines,
O'er curtailed dishes and o'er stinted wines;
O'er petty quarrels upon petty things—
Is this the man who scourged or feasted kings?
Behold the scales in which his fortune hangs,
A surgeon's statement and an earl's harangues!
A bust delayed, a book refused, can shake
The sleep of him who kept the world awake.

Is this indeed the Tamer of the Great,
Now slave of all could teaze or irritate—
The paltry jailer and the prying spy,
The staring stranger with his note-book nigh?
Plunged in a dungeon, he had still been great;
How low, how little was this middle state,
Between a prison and a palace, where
How few could feel for what he had to bear!
Vain his complaint,—my lord presents his bill,
His food and wine were doled out duly still:
Vain was his sickness,—never was a clime
So free from homicide—to doubt's a crime;
And the stiff Surgeon, who maintained his cause,
Hath lost his place, and gained the world's applause.
But smile—though all the pangs of brain and heart
Disdain, defy, the tardy aid of art;
Though, save the few fond friends, and imaged face
Of that fair boy his sire shall ne'er embrace,
None stand by his low bed—though even the mind
Be wavering, which long awed and awes mankind;—
Smile—for the fettered Eagle breaks his chain,
And higher worlds than this are his again.

IV.

How, if that soaring Spirit still retain
A conscious twilight of his blazing reign,

How must he smile, on looking down, to see
The little that he was and sought to be!
What though his name a wider empire found
Than his ambition, though with scarce a bound;
Though first in glory, deepest in reverse,
He tasted empire's blessings and its curse;
Though kings, rejoicing in their late escape
From chains, would gladly be *their* tyrant's ape;
How must he smile, and turn to yon lone grave,
The proudest sea-mark that o'ertops the wave!
What though his jailor, duteous to the last,
Scarce deemed the coffin's lead could keep him fast,
Refusing one poor line along the lid
To date the birth and death of all it hid,
That name shall hallow the ignoble shore,
A talisman to all save him who bore:
The fleets that sweep before the eastern blast
Shall hear their sea-boys hail it from the mast;
When Victory's Gallic column shall but rise,
Like Pompey's pillar, in a desart's skies,
The rocky isle that holds or held his dust
Shall crown the Atlantic like the hero's bust,
And mighty Nature o'er his obsequies
Do more than niggard Envy still denies.
But what are these to him? Can glory's lust
Touch the freed spirit or the fettered dust?
Small care hath he of what his tomb consists,

Nought if he sleeps—nor more if he exists:
Alike the better-seeing Shade will smile
On the rude cavern of the rocky isle,
As if his ashes found their latest home
In Rome's pantheon, or Gaul's mimic dome.
He wants not this; but France shall feel the want
Of this last consolation, though so scant;
Her honour, fame, and faith, demand his bones,
To rear above a pyramid of thrones;
Or carried onward in the battle's van
To form, like Guesclin's * dust, her talisman.
But be it as it is, the time may come
His name shall beat the alarm like Ziska's drum.

V.

Oh heaven! of which he was in power a feature;
Oh earth! of which he was a noble creature;
Thou isle! to be remembered long and well,
That sawst the unfledged eaglet chip his shell!
Ye Alps, which viewed him in his dawning flights
Hover, the victor of an hundred fights!
Thou Rome, who sawst thy Cæsar's deeds outdone!
Alas! why past he too the Rubicon?

* Guesclin died during the siege of a city; it surrendered, and the keys were brought and laid upon his bier, so that the place might appear rendered to his ashes.

The Rubicon of man's awakened rights,
To herd with vulgar kings and parasites?
Egypt! from whose all dateless tombs arose
Forgotten Pharoahs from their long repose,
And shook within their pyramids to hear
A new Cambyses thundering in their ear;
While the dark shades of forty ages stood
Like startled giants by Nile's famous flood;
Or from the pyramid's tall pinnacle
Beheld the desart peopled, as from hell,
With clashing hosts, who strewed the barren sand
To re-manure the uncultivated land!
Spain! which, a moment mindless of the Cid,
Beheld his banner flouting thy Madrid!
Austria! which saw thy twice-ta'en capital
Twice spared, to be the traitress of his fall!
Ye race of Frederic!—Fredcrics but in name
And falsehood—heirs to all except his fame;
Who, crushed at Jena, crouched at Berlin, fell
First, and but rose to follow; ye who dwell
Where Kosciusko dwelt, remembering yet
The unpaid amount of Catherine's bloody debt!
Poland! o'er which the avenging angel past,
But left thee as he found thee, still a waste;
Forgetting all thy still enduring claim,
Thy lotted people and extinguished name;
Thy sigh for freedom, thy long-flowing tear,

That sound that crashes in the tyrant's ear;
Kosciusko! on—on—on—the thirst of war
Gasps for the gore of serfs and of their Czar;
The half barbaric Moscow's minarets
Gleam in the sun, but 'tis a sun that sets!
Moscow! thou limit of his long career,
For which rude Charles had wept his frozen tear
To see in vain—*he* saw thee—how? with spire
And palace fuel to one common fire.
To this the soldier lent his kindling match,
To this the peasant gave his cottage thatch,
To this the merchant flung his hoarded store,
The prince his hall—and, Moscow was no more!
Sublimest of volcanos! Etna's flame
Pales before thine, and quenchless Hecla's tame;
Vesuvius shews his blaze, an usual sight
For gaping tourists, from his hacknied height:
Thou stand'st alone unrivalled, till the fire
To come, in which all empires shall expire.
Thou other element! as strong and stern
To teach a lesson conquerors will not learn,
Whose icy wing flapped o'er the faltering foe,
Till fell a hero with each flake of snow;
How did thy numbing beak and silent fang
Pierce, till hosts perished with a single pang!
In vain shall Seine look up along his banks
For the gay thousands of his dashing ranks;

In vain shall France recall beneath her vines
Her youth; their blood flows faster than her wines;
Or stagnant in their human ice remains
In frozen mummies on the Polar plains.
In vain will Italy's broad sun awaken
Her offspring chilled; its beams are now forsaken.
Of all the trophies gathered from the war,
What shall return? The conqueror's broken car!
The conqueror's yet unbroken heart! Again
The horn of Roland sounds, and not in vain.
Lutzen, where fell the Swede of victory,
Beholds him conquer, but, alas! not die:
Dresden surveys three despots fly once more
Before their sovereign,—sovereign as before;
But there exhausted Fortune quits the field,
And Leipsic's treason bids the unvanquished yield;
The Saxon jackall leaves the lion's side
To turn the bear's, and wolf's, and fox's guide,
And backward to the den of his despair
The forest monarch shrinks, but finds no lair!
Oh ye! and each, and all! Oh, France! who found
Thy long fair fields plough'd up as hostile ground,
Disputed foot by foot, till treason, still
His only victor, from Montmartre's hill
Looked down o'er trampled Paris; and thou, isle,
Which seest Etruria from thy ramparts smile,
Thou momentary shelter of his pride,

Till wooed by danger, his yet weeping bride;
Oh, France! retaken by a single march,
Whose path was through one long triumphal arch!
Oh, bloody and most bootless Waterloo,
Which proves how fools may have their fortune too
Won, half by blunder, half by treachery;
Oh, dull Saint Helen! with thy jailer nigh—
* Hear! hear! Prometheus from his rock appeal
To earth, air, ocean, all that felt or feel
His power and glory, all who yet shall hear
A name eternal as the rolling year;
He teaches them the lesson taught so long,
So oft, so vainly—learn to do no wrong!
A single step into the right had made
This man the Washington of worlds betrayed;
A single step into the wrong has given
His name a doubt to all the winds of heaven;
The reed of Fortune and of thrones the rod,
Of Fame the Moloch or the demigod;
His country's Cæsar, Europe's Hannibal,
Without their decent dignity of fall.
Yet Vanity herself had better taught
A surer path even to the fame he sought,
By pointing out on history's fruitless page

* I refer the reader to the first address of Prometheus in Æschylus, when he is left alone by his attendants, and before the arrival of the Chorus of Sea-nymphs.

Ten thousand conquerors for a single sage.
While Franklin's quiet memory climbs to heaven,
Calming the lightning which he thence hath riven,
Or drawing from the no less kindled earth
Freedom and peace to that which boasts his birth:
While Washington's a watch-word, such as ne'er
Shall sink while there's an echo left to air:
While even the Spaniard's thirst of gold and war
Forgets Pizarro to shout Bolivar!
Alas! why must the same Atlantic wave
Which wafted freedom gird a tyrant's grave—
The king of kings, and yet of slaves the slave,
Who burst the chains of millions to renew
The very fetters which his arm broke through,
And crushed the rights of Europe and his own
To flit between a dungeon and a throne?

VI.

But 'twill not be—the spark's awakened—lo!
The swarthy Spaniard feels his former glow;
The same high spirit which beat back the Moor
Through eight long ages of alternate gore,
Revives—and where? in that avenging clime
Where Spain was once synonimous with crime,
Where Cortes' and Pizarro's banner flew;
The infant world redeems her name of "*New.*"

'Tis the *old* aspiration breathed afresh,
To kindle souls within degraded flesh,
Such as repulsed the Persian from the shore
Where Greece *was*—No! she still is Greece once more.
One common cause makes myriads of one breast,
Slaves of the East, or Helots of the West;
On Andes' and on Athos' peaks unfurled,
The self-same standard streams o'er either world;
The Athenian wears again Harmodius' sword;
The Chili chief abjures his foreign lord;
The Spartan knows himself once more a Greek;
Young Freedom plumes the crest of each Cacique;
Debating despots, hemmed on either shore,
Shrink vainly from the roused Atlantic's roar;
Through Calpe's strait the rolling tides advance,
Sweep slightly by the half-tamed land of France,
Dash o'er the old Spaniard's cradle, and would fain
Unite Ausonia to the mighty main:
But driven from thence awhile, yet not for aye,
Break o'er th' Ægean, mindful of the day
Of Salamis—there, there, the waves arise,
Not to be lulled by tyrant victories.
Lone, lost, abandoned in their utmost need
By Christians unto whom they gave their creed,
The desolated lands, the ravaged isle,
The fostered feud encouraged to beguile,
The aid evaded, and the cold delay,

Prolonged but in the hope to make a prey;—
These, these shall tell the tale, and Greece can shew
The false friend worse than the infuriate foe.
But this is well: Greeks only should free Greece,
Not the barbarian, with his mask of peace.
How should the Autocrat of Bondage be
The king of serfs, and set the nations free?
Better still serve the haughty Mussulman,
Than swell the Cossaque's prowling caravan;
Better still toil for masters, than await,
The slave of slaves, before a Russian gate,—
Numbered by hordes, a human capital,
A live estate, existing but for thrall,
Lotted by thousands, as a meet reward
For the first courtier in the Czar's regard;
While their immediate owner never tastes
His sleep, *sans* dreaming of Siberia's wastes;
Better succumb even to their own despair,
And drive the camel than purvey the bear.

VII.

But not alone within the hoariest clime,
Where Freedom dates her birth with that of Time;
And not alone where, plunged in night, a crowd
Of Incas darken to a dubious cloud,
The dawn revives: renowned, romantic Spain

Holds back the invader from her soil again.
Not now the Roman tribe nor Punic horde
Demand her fields as lists to prove the sword;
Not now the Vandal or the Visigoth
Pollute the plains alike abhorring both;
Nor old Pelayo on his mountain rears
The warlike fathers of a thousand years.
That seed is sown and reaped, as oft the Moor
Sighs to remember on his dusky shore.
Long in the peasant's song or poet's page
Has dwelt the memory of Abencerage,
The Zegri, and the captive victors, flung
Back to the barbarous realm from whence they sprung.
But these are gone—their faith, their swords, their sway,
Yet left more Antichristian foes than they:
The bigot monarch and the butcher priest,
The Inquisition, with her burning feast,
The Faith's red "auto," fed with human fuel,
While sate the Catholic Moloch, calmly cruel,
Enjoying, with inexorable eye,
That fiery festival of agony!
The stern or feeble sovereign, one or both
By turns; the haughtiness whose pride was sloth;
The long degenerate noble; the debased
Hidalgo, and the peasant less disgraced
But more degraded; the unpeopled realm;
The once proud navy which forgot the helm;

The once impervious phalanx disarrayed;
The idle forge that form'd Toledo's blade;
The foreign wealth that flow'd on ev'ry shore,
Save her's who earned it with the natives' gore;
The very language, which might vie with Rome's,
And once was known to nations like their home's,
Neglected or forgotten:—such was Spain;
But such she is not, nor shall be again.
These worst, these *home* invaders, felt and feel
The new Numantine soul of old Castile.
Up! up again! undaunted Tauridor!
The bull of Phalaris renews his roar;
Mount, chivalrous Hidalgo! not in vain
Revive the cry—"Iago! and close Spain!" *
Yes, close her with your armed bosoms round,
And form the barrier which Napoleon found,—
The exterminating war; the desart plain;
The streets without a tenant, save the slain;
The wild Sierra, with its wilder troop
Of vulture-plumed Guerillas, on the stoop
For their incessant prey; the desperate wall
Of Saragossa, mightiest in her fall;
The man nerved to a spirit, and the maid
Waving her more than Amazonian blade;
The knife of Arragon,† Toledo's steel;

* "St. Iago! and close Spain!" the old Spanish war-cry.

† The Arragonians are peculiarly dextrous in the use of this weapon, and displayed it particularly in former French wars.

The famous lance of chivalrous Castile;
The unerring rifle of the Catalan;
The Andalusian courser in the van;
The torch to make a Moscow of Madrid;
And in each heart the spirit of the Cid:—
Such have been, such shall be, such are. Advance,
And win—not Spain, but thine own freedom, France!

VIII.

But lo! a Congress! What, that hallowed name
Which freed the Atlantic? May we hope the same
For outworn Europe? With the sound arise,
Like Samuel's shade to Saul's monarchic eyes,
The prophets of young Freedom, summoned far
From climes of Washington and Bolivar;
Henry, the forest-born Demosthenes,
Whose thunder shook the Philip of the seas;
And stoic Franklin's energetic shade,
Robed in the lightnings which his hand allayed;
And Washington, the tyrant-tamer, wake,
To bid us blush for these old chains, or break.
But *who* compose this Senate of the few
That should redeem the many? *Who* renew
This consecr..ted name, till now assigned
To councils held to benefit mankind?
Who now assemble at the holy call?

The blest Alliance, which says three are all!
An earthly Trinity! which wears the shape
Of heaven's, as man is mimicked by the ape.
A pious unity! in purpose one—
To melt three fools to a Napoleon.
Why, Egypt's gods were rational to these;
Their dogs and oxen knew their own degrees,
And, quiet in their kennel or their shed,
Cared little, so that they were duly fed;
But these, more hungry, must have something more,
The power to bark and bite, to toss and gore.
Ah, how much happier were good Æsop's frogs
Than we! for ours are animated logs,
With ponderous malice swaying to and fro,
And crushing nations with a stupid blow,
All dully anxious to leave little work
Unto the revolutionary stork.

IX.

Thrice blest Verona! since the holy three
With their imperial presence shine on thee;
Honoured by them, thy treacherous site forgets
The vaunted tomb of "all the Capulets;"
Thy Scaligers—for what was "Dog the Great,"
"Can Grande" (which I venture to translate)
To these sublimer pugs? Thy poet too,

Catullus, whose old laurels yield to new;
Thine amphitheatre, where Romans sate;
And Dante's exile, sheltered by thy gate;
Thy good old man, * whose world was all within
Thy wall, nor knew the country held him in:
Would that the royal guests it girds about
Were so far like, as never to get out!
Aye, shout! inscribe! rear monuments of shame,
To tell Oppression that the world is tame!
Crowd to the theatre with loyal rage,
The comedy is not upon the stage;
The show is rich in ribbonry and stars,
Then gaze upon it through thy dungeon bars;
Clap thy permitted palms, kind Italy,
For thus much still thy fettered hands are free!

X.

Resplendent sight! behold the coxcomb Czar,
The autocrat of waltzes and of war!
As eager for a plaudit as a realm,
And just as fit for flirting as the helm;
A Calmuck beauty with a Cossack wit,
And generous spirit, when 'tis not frost-bit;
Now half dissolving to a liberal thaw,

* The famous old man of Verona.

But hardened back whene'er the morning's raw;
With no objection to true liberty,
Except that it would make the nations free.
How well the Imperial Dandy prates of peace,
How fain, if Greeks would be his slaves, free Greece!
How nobly gave he back the Poles their Diet,
Then told pugnacious Poland to be quiet!
How kindly would he send the mild Ukraine,
With all her pleasant pulks, to lecture Spain;
How royally shew off in proud Madrid
His goodly person, from the South long hid;
A blessing cheaply purchased, the world knows,
By having Muscovites for friends or foes.
Proceed, thou namesake of Great Philip's son!
La Harpe, thine Aristotle, beckons on;
And that which Scythia was to him of yore,
Find with thy Scythians on Iberia's shore.
Yet think upon, thou somewhat aged youth,
Thy predecessor on the banks of Pruth;
Thou hast to aid thee, should his lot be thine,
Many an old woman, but no Catherine. *
Spain too hath rocks, and rivers, and defiles—
The bear may rush into the lion's toils.
Fatal to Goths are Xeres' sunny fields;

* The dexterity of Catherine extricated Peter (called the Great by courtesy) when surrounded by the Mussulmans on the banks of the river Pruth.

Think'st thou to thee Napoleon's victor yields?
Better reclaim thy deserts, turn thy swords
To ploughshares, shave and wash thy Bashkir hordes,
Redeem thy realms from slavery and the knout,
Than follow headlong in the fatal route,
To infest the clime whose skies and laws are pure
With thy foul legions. Spain wants no manure;
Her soil is fertile, but she feeds no foe;
Her vultures, too, were gorged not long ago;
And wouldst thou furnish them with fresher prey?
Alas! thou wilt not conquer, but purvey.
I am Diogenes, though Russ and Hun
Stand between mine and many a myriad's sun;
But were I not Diogenes, I'd wander
Rather a worm than *such* an Alexander!
Be slaves who will, the Cynic shall be free;
His tub hath tougher walls than Sinopè:
Still will he hold his lanthorn up to scan
The face of monarchs for an "honest man."

XI.

And what doth Gaul, the all-prolific land
Of *ne plus ultra* Ultras and their band
Of mercenaries? and her noisy Chambers
And Tribune, which each orator first clambers
Before he finds a voice, and when 'tis found,

Hears "the lie" echo for his answer round!
Our British Commons sometimes deign to hear;
A Gallic Senate hath more tongue than ear;
Even Constant, their sole master of debate,
Must fight next day his speech to vindicate.
But this costs little to true Franks, who had rather
Combat than listen, were it to their father.
What is the simple standing of a shot,
To listening long, and interrupting not?
Though this was not the method of old Rome,
When Tully fulmined o'er each vocal dome,
Demosthenes has sanctioned the transaction,
In saying eloquence meant "Action, action!"

XII.

But where's the Monarch? hath he dined? or yet
Groans beneath indigestion's heavy debt?
Have revolutionary patès risen,
And turned the royal entrails to a prison?
Have discontented movements stirred the troops?
Or have *no* movements followed traitrous soups?
Have Carbonaro cooks not carbonadoed
Each course enough? or doctors dire dissuaded
Repletion? Ah! in thy dejected looks
I read all France's treason in her cooks!
Good classic Louis! is it, canst thou say,

Desirable to be the "Desiré?"
Why wouldst thou leave calm Hartwell's green abode,
Apician table and Horatian ode,
To rule a people who will not be ruled,
And love much rather to be scourged than schooled?
Ah! thine was not the temper or the taste
For thrones, the table sees thee better placed:
A mild Epicurean, formed, at best,
To be a kind host and as good a guest,
To talk of letters, and to know by heart
One *half* the poet's, *all* the gourmand's art;
A scholar always, now and then a wit,
And gentle when digestion may permit—
But not to govern lands enslaved or free;
The gout was martyrdom enough for thee!

XIII.

Shall noble Albion pass without a phrase
From a bold Briton in her wonted praise?
"Arts—arms—and George—and glory and the isles—
And happy Britain—wealth and freedom's smiles—
White cliffs, that held invasion far aloof—
Contented subjects, all alike tax-proof—
Proud Wellington, with eagle beak so curled,
That nose, the hook where he suspends the world!*

* "Naso suspendit adunco."—Horace.
The Roman applies it to one who merely was imperious to his acquaintance.

And Waterloo—and trade—and——(hush! not yet
A syllable of imposts or of debt)——
And ne'er (enough) lamented Castlereagh,
Whose pen-knife slit a goose-quill t'other day—
And 'pilots who have weathered every storm'—
(But, no, not even for rhyme's sake, name reform)."
These are the themes thus sung so oft before,
Methinks we need not sing them any more;
Found in so many volumes far and near,
There's no occasion you should find them here.
Yet something may remain perchance to chime
With reason, and, what's stranger still, with rhyme;
Even this thy genius, Canning! may permit,
Who, bred a statesman, still was born a wit,
And never, even in that dull house, couldst tame
To unleavened prose thine own poetic flame;
Our last, our best, our only orator,
Even I can praise thee—Tories do no more,
Nay, not so much;—they hate thee, man, because
Thy spirit less upholds them than it awes.
The hounds will gather to their huntsman's hollo,
And where he leads the duteous pack will follow;
But not for love mistake their yelling cry,
Their yelp for game is not an eulogy;
Less faithful far than the four-footed pack,
A dubious scent would lure the bipeds back.
Thy saddle girths are not yet quite secure,

Nor royal stallion's feet extremely sure;
The unwieldy old White Horse is apt at last
To stumble, kick, and now and then stick fast
With his great self and rider in the mud;
But what of that? the animal shews blood.

XIV.

Alas, the country! how shall tongue or pen
Bewail her now uncountry gentlemen?
The last to bid the cry of warfare cease,
The first to make a malady of peace.
For what were all these country patriots born?
To hunt, and vote, and raise the price of corn?
But corn, like every mortal thing, must fall,
Kings, conquerors, and markets most of all.
And must ye fall with every ear of grain?
Why would you trouble Buonaparte's reign?
He was your great Triptolemus; his vices
Destroyed but realms, and still maintained your prices;
He amplified to every lord's content
The grand Agrarian Alchymy hight *Rent*.
Why did the tyrant stumble on the Tartars,
And lower wheat to such desponding quarters?
Why did you chain him on yon isle so lone?
The man was worth much more upon his throne.
True, blood and treasure boundlessly were spil

But what of that? the Gaul may bear the guilt;
But bread was high, the farmer paid his way,
And acres told upon the appointed day.
But where is now the goodly audit ale?
The purse-proud tenant never known to fail?
The farm which never yet was left on hand?
The marsh reclaimed to most improving land?
The impatient hope of the expiring lease?
The doubling rental? What an evil 's peace!
In vain the prize excites the ploughman's skill,
In vain the Commons pass their patriot bill;
The *landed interest*—(you may understand
The phrase much better leaving out the *land*)—
The land self-interest groans from shore to shore,
For fear that plenty should attain the poor.
Up! up again! ye rents, exalt your notes,
Or else the Ministry will lose their votes,
And Patriotism, so delicately nice,
Her loaves will lower to the market price;
For ah! "the loaves and fishes," once so high,
Are gone—their oven closed, their ocean dry,
And nought remains of all the millions spent,
Excepting to grow moderate and content.
They who are not so, *had* their turn—and turn
About still flows from Fortune's equal urn;
Now let their virtue be its own reward,
And share the blessings which themselves prepared.

See these inglorious Cincinnati swarm,
Farmers of war, Dictators of the farm!
Their ploughshare was the sword in hireling hands,
Their fields manured by gore of other lands;
Safe in their barns, these Sabine tillers sent
Their brethren out to battle—why? for Rent!
Year after year they voted cent. per cent.
Blood, sweat, and tear-wrung millions—why? for Rent!
They roared, they dined, they drank, they swore they meant
To die for England—why then live? for Rent!
The peace has made one general malcontent
Of these high-market patriots; war was Rent!
Their love of country, millions all mis-spent,
How reconcile? by reconciling Rent.
And will they not repay the treasures lent?
No: down with every thing, and up with Rent!
Their good, ill, health, wealth, joy, or discontent,
Being, end, aim, religion—Rent, Rent, Rent!
Thou soldst thy birthright, Esau! for a mess:
Thou shouldst have gotten more, or eaten less;
Now thou hast swilled thy pottage, thy demands
Are idle; Israel says the bargain stands.
Such, landlords! was your appetite for war,
And, gorg'd with blood, you grumble at a scar!
What, would they spread their earthquake even o'er Cash?
And when land crumbles, bid firm paper crash?
So rent may rise, bid bank and nation fall,

And found on Change a *Fundling* Hospital?
Lo, Mother Church, while all religion writhes,
Like Niobe, weeps o'er her offspring, Tithes;
The Prelates go to—where the saints have gone,
And proud pluralities subside to one;
Church, state, and faction, wrestle in the dark,
Tossed by the Deluge in their common ark.
Shorn of her Bishops, banks, and dividends,
Another Babel soars—but Britain ends.
And why? to pamper the self-seeking wants,
And prop the hill of these agrarian ants.
"Go to these ants, thou sluggard, and be wise;"
Admire their patience through each sacrifice,
Till taught to feel the lesson of their pride,
The price of taxes and of homicide;
Admire their justice, which would fain deny
The debt of nations:—pray, *who made it high?*

XV.

Or turn to sail between those shifting rocks,
The new Symplegades—the crushing Stocks,
Where Midas might again his wish behold
In real paper or imagined gold.
That magic palace of Alcina shows
More wealth than Britain ever had to lose,
Were all her atoms of unleavened ore,
And all her pebbles from Pactolus' shore.

There Fortune plays, while Rumour holds the stake,
And the world trembles to bid brokers break.
How rich is Britain! not indeed in mines,
Or peace, or plenty, corn, or oil, or wines;
No land of Canaan, full of milk and honey,
Nor (save in paper shekels) ready money:
But let us not to own the truth refuse,
Was ever Christian land so rich in Jews?
Those parted with their teeth to good King John,
And now, ye kings! they kindly draw your own;
All states, all things, all sovereigns they controul,
And waft a loan "from Indus to the Pole."
The banker—broker—baron—brethren, speed
To aid these bankrupt tyrants in their need.
Nor these alone; Columbia feels no less
Fresh speculations follow each success;
And philanthropic Israel deigns to drain
Her mild per centage from exhausted Spain.
Not without Abraham's seed can Russia march,
'Tis gold, not steel, that rears the conqueror's arch
Two Jews, a chosen people, can command
In every realm their scripture-promised land:—
Two Jews keep down the Romans, and uphold
The accursed Hun, more brutal than of old:
Two Jews—but not Samaritans—direct
The world, with all the spirit of their sect.
What is the happiness of earth to them?
A Congress forms their "New Jerusalem,"

Where baronies and orders both invite—
Oh, holy Abraham! dost thou see the sight?
Thy followers mingling with these royal swine,
Who spit not "on their Jewish gaberdine,"
But honour them as portion of the show—
(Where now, oh, Pope! is thy forsaken toe?
Could it not favour Judah with some kicks?
Or has it ceased to "kick against the pricks?")
On Shylock's shore behold them stand afresh,
To cut from nation's hearts their "pound of flesh."

XVI.

Strange sight this Congress! destined to unite
All that's incongruous, all that's opposite.
I speak not of the Sovereigns—they're alike,
A common coin as ever mint could strike:
But those who sway the puppets, pull the strings,
Have more of motley than their heavy kings.
Jews, authors, generals, charlatans, combine,
While Europe wonders at the vast design:
There Metternich, power's foremost parasite,
Cajoles; there Wellington forgets to fight;
There Chateaubriand forms new books of martyrs; *

* Monsieur Chateaubriand, who has not forgotten the author in the minister, received a handsome compliment at Verona from a literary sovereign: "Ah! Monsieur C——, are you related to that Chateaubriand who—who—who has written *something?*" (ecrit *quelque chose!*) It is said that the author of Atala repented him for a moment of his legitimacy.

And subtle Greeks intrigue for stupid Tartars;
There Montmorency, the sworn foe to charters,
Turns a diplomatist of great eclât,
To furnish articles for the "Debâts;"
Of war so certain—yet not quite so sure
As his dismissal in the "Moniteur."
Alas! how could his cabinet thus err?
Can peace be worth an Ultra-Minister?
He falls indeed, perhaps to rise again
"Almost as quickly as he conquered Spain."

XVII.

Enough of this—a sight more mournful woos
The averted eye of the reluctant Muse.
The imperial daughter, the imperial bride,
The imperial victim—sacrifice to pride;
The mother of the hero's hope, the boy,
The young Astyanax of modern Troy;
The still pale shadow of the loftiest queen
That earth has yet to see, or e'er hath seen;
She flits amidst the phantoms of the hour,
The theme of pity, and the wreck of power.
Oh, cruel mockery! Could not Austria spare
A daughter? What did France's widow there?
Her fitter place was by St. Helen's wave,
Her only throne is in Napoleon's grave.
But, no,—she still must hold a petty reign,

Flanked by her formidable chamberlain;
The martial Argus, whose not hundred eyes
Must watch her through these paltry pageantries.
What though she share no more and shared in vain
A sway surpassing that of Charlemagne,
Which swept from Moscow to the Southern seas,
Yet still she rules the pastoral realm of cheese,
Where Parma views the traveller resort
To note the trappings of her mimic court.
But she appears! Verona sees her shorn
Of all her beams—while nations gaze and mourn—
Ere yet her husband's ashes have had time
To chill in their inhospitable clime;
(If ere those awful ashes can grow cold;—
But no,—their embers soon will burst the mould)
She comes!—the Andromache (but not Racine's,
Nor Homer's) Lo! on Pyrrhus' arm she leans!
Yes! the right arm, yet red from Waterloo,
Which cut her lord's half shattered sceptre through,
Is offered and accepted! Could a slave
Do more? or less?—and *he* in his new grave!
Her eye, her cheek, betray no inward strife,
And the *Ex*-Empress grows as *Ex* a wife!
So much for human ties in royal breasts!
Why spare men's feelings, when their own are jests?

XVIII.

But, tired of foreign follies, I turn home,
And sketch the groupe—the picture's yet to come.
My Muse 'gan weep, but, ere a tear was spilt,
She caught Sir William Curtis in a kilt!
While thronged the Chiefs of every Highland clan
To hail their brother, Vich Ian Alderman!
Guildhall grows Gael, and echos with Erse roar,
While all the Common Council cry, "Claymore!"
To see proud Albyn's Tartans as a belt
Gird the gross sirloin of a City Celt,
She burst into a laughter so extreme,
That I awoke—and lo! it was *no* dream!

Here, reader, will we pause:—if there's no harm in
This first—you'll have, perhaps, a second "Carmen."

THE END.

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